

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

DECEMBER, 1861.

Philip.

CHAPTER XXV.

INFANDI DOLORES.



HILIP'S heart beat very quickly at seeing this grim pair, and the guilty newspaper before them, on which Mrs. Baynes' lean right hand was laid. "So, sir," she cried, "you still honour us with your company: after distinguishing yourself as you did the night before last. Fighting and boxing like a porter at his Excellency's ball. It's disgusting! I have no other word for it: disgusting!" And here I suppose she nudged

the general, or gave him some look or signal by which he knew he was to come into action: for Baynes straightway advanced and delivered his fire.

"Faith, sir, more bub-ub-blackguard conduct I never heard of in my life! That's the only word for it: the only word for it," cries Baynes.

"The general knows what blackguard conduct is, and yours is that conduct, Mr. Firmin! It is all over the town: is talked of everywhere: will be in all the newspapers. When his lordship heard of it, he was furious. Never, never, will you be admitted into the Embassy again, after disgracing yourself as you have done," cries the lady.

"Disgracing yourself, that's the word.—And disgraceful your conduct was, begad!" cries the officer second in command.

"You don't know my provocation," pleaded poor Philip. "As I came up to him Twysden was boasting that he had struck me—and—and laughing at me."

"And a pretty figure you were to come to a ball. Who could help laughing, sir?"

"He bragged of having insulted me, and I lost my temper, and struck him in return. The thing is done and can't be helped," growled Philip.

"Strike a little man before ladies! Very brave indeed!" cries the lady.

"Mrs. Baynes!"

"I call it cowardly. In the army we consider it cowardly to quarrel before ladies," continues Mrs. General B.

"I have waited at home for two days to see if he wanted any more," groaned Philip.

"Oh, yes! After insulting and knocking a little man down, you want to murder him! And you call that the conduct of a Christian—the conduct of a gentleman!"

"The conduct of a ruffian, by George!" says General Baynes.

"It was prudent of you to choose a very little man, and to have the ladies within hearing!" continues Mrs. Baynes. "Why, I wonder you haven't beaten my dear children next. Don't you, general, wonder he has not knocked down our poor boys? They are quite small. And it is evident that ladies being present is no hindrance to Mr. Firmin's boxing-matches."

"The conduct is gross, and unworthy of a gentleman," reiterates the General.

"You hear what that man says—that old man, who never says an unkind word? That veteran, who has been in twenty battles, and never struck a man before women yet? Did you, Charles? He has given you his opinion. He has called you a name which I won't soil my lips with repeating, but which you deserve. And do you suppose, sir, that I will give my blessed child to a man who has acted as you have acted, and been called a——? Charles! General! I will go to my grave rather than see my daughter given up to such a man!"

"Good heavens!" said Philip, his knees trembling under him. "You don't mean to say that you intend to go from your word, and——"

"Oh! you threaten about money, do you? Because your father was a cheat, you intend to try and make us suffer, do you?" shrieks the lady.

"A man who strikes a little man before ladies will commit any act of cowardice, I daresay. And if you wish to beggar my family, because your father was a rogue——"

"My dear!" interposes the general.

"Wasn't he a rogue, Baynes? Is there any denying it? Haven't you said so a hundred and a hundred times? A nice family to marry into! No, Mr. Firmin! You may insult me as you please. You may

strike little men before ladies. You may lift your great wicked hand against that poor old man, in one of your tipsy fits: but I know a mother's love, a mother's duty—and I desire that we see you no more."

"Great Powers!" cries Philip, aghast. "You don't mean to—to separate me from Charlotte, general! I have your word. You encouraged me. I shall break my heart. I'll go down on my knees to that fellow. I'll—oh!—you don't mean what you say!" And, scared and sobbing, the poor fellow clasped his strong hands together, and appealed to the general.

Baynes was under his wife's eye. "I think," he said, "your conduct has been confoundedly bad, disorderly, and ungentlemanlike. You can't support my child, if you marry her. And if you have the least spark of honour in you, as you say you have, it is you, Mr. Firmin, who will break off the match, and release the poor child from certain misery. By George, sir, how is a man who fights and quarrels in a nobleman's ball-room, to get on in the world? How is a man, who can't afford a decent coat to his back, to keep a wife? The more I have known you, the more I have felt that the engagement would bring misery upon my child! Is that what you want? A man of honour—" (*"Honour!"* in italics, from Mrs. Baynes.) "Hush, my dear!—A man of spirit would give her up, sir. What have you to offer but beggary, by George? Do you want my girl to come home to your lodgings, and mend your clothes?"—"I think I put that point pretty well, Bunch, my boy," said the general, talking of the matter afterwards. "I hit him there, sir."

The old soldier did indeed strike his adversary there with a vital stab. Philip's coat, no doubt, was ragged, and his purse but light. He had sent money to his father out of his small stock. There were one or two servants in the old house in Parr Street, who had been left without their wages, and a part of these debts Philip had paid. He knew his own violence of temper, and his unruly independence. He thought very humbly of his talents, and often doubted of his capacity to get on in the world. In his less hopeful moods, he trembled to think that he might be bringing poverty and unhappiness upon his dearest little maiden, for whom he would joyfully have sacrificed his blood, his life. Poor Philip sank back sickening and fainting almost under Baynes's words.

"You'll let me—you'll let me see her?" he gasped out.

"She's unwell. She is in her bed. She can't appear to-day!" cried the mother.

"Oh, Mrs. Baynes! I must—I must see her," Philip said; and fairly broke out in a sob of pain.

"This is the man that strikes men before women!" said Mrs. Baynes.

"Very courageous, certainly!"

"By George, Eliza!" the general cried out, starting up, "it's too bad——"

"Infirm of purpose, give me the daggers!" Philip yelled out, whilst describing the scene to his biographer in after days. "Macbeth

would never have done the murders but for that little quiet woman at his side. When the Indian prisoners are killed, the squaws always invent the worst tortures. You should have seen that fiend and her livid smile, as she was drilling her gimlets into my heart. I don't know how I offended her. I tried to like her, sir. I had humbled myself before her. I went on her errands. I played cards with her. I sate and listened to her dreadful stories about Barrackpore and the governor-general. I wallowed in the dust before her, and she hated me. I can see her face now: her cruel yellow face, and her sharp teeth, and her gray eyes. It was the end of August, and pouring a storm that day. I suppose my poor child was cold and suffering up-stairs, for I heard the poking of a fire in her little room. When I hear a fire poked over-head now—twenty years after—the whole thing comes back to me; and I suffer over again that infernal agony. Were I to live a thousand years, I could not forgive her. I never did her a wrong, but I can't forgive her. Ah, my Heaven, how that woman tortured me!"

"I think I know one or two similar instances," said Mr. Firmin's biographer.

"You are always speaking ill of women!" said Mr. Firmin's biographer's wife.

"No, thank Heaven!" said the gentleman. "I think I know some of whom I never thought or spoke a word of evil. My dear, will you give Philip some more tea?" and with this the gentleman's narrative is resumed.

The rain was beating down the avenue as Philip went into the street. He looked up at Charlotte's window: but there was no sign. There was a flicker of a fire there. The poor girl had the fever, and was shuddering in her little room, weeping and sobbing on Madame Smolensk's shoulder. *Que c'était pitié à voir*, madame said. Her mother had told her she must break from Philip; had invented and spoken a hundred calumnies against him; declared that he never cared for her; that he had loose principles, and was for ever haunting theatres and bad company. "It's not true, mother, it's not true!" the little girl had cried, flaming up in revolt for a moment: but she soon subsided in tears and misery, utterly broken by the thought of her calamity. Then her father had been brought to her, who had been made to believe some of the stories against poor Philip, and who was commanded by his wife to impress them upon the girl. And Baynes tried to obey orders; but he was scared and cruelly pained by the sight of his little maiden's grief and suffering. He attempted a weak expostulation, and began a speech or two. But his heart failed him. He retreated behind his wife. *She* never hesitated in speech or resolution, and her language became more bitter as her ally faltered. Philip was a drunkard; Philip was a prodigal; Philip was a frequenter of dissolute haunts, and loose companions. She had the best authority for what she said. Was not a mother anxious for the welfare of her own child? ("Begad, you don't suppose your

own mother would do anything that was not for your welfare, now?" broke in the general, feebly.) "Do you think if he had not been drunk he would have ventured to commit such an atrocious outrage as that at the Embassy? And do you suppose I want a drunkard and a beggar to marry my daughter? Your ingratitude, Charlotte, is horrible!" cries mamma. And poor Philip, charged with drunkenness, had dined for seventeen sous, with a carafon of beer, and had counted on a supper that night by little Charlotte's side: so, while the child lay sobbing on her bed, the mother stood over her, and lashed her. For General Baynes,—a brave man, a kind-hearted man,—to have to look on whilst this torture was inflicted, must have been a hard duty. He could not eat the boarding-house dinner, though he took his place at the table at the sound of the dismal bell. Madame herself was not present at the meal; and you know poor Charlotte's place was vacant. Her father went upstairs, and paused by her bed-room door, and listened. He heard murmurs within, and madame's voice, as he stumbled at the door, cried harshly, "*Qui est là?*" He entered. Madame was sitting on the bed, with Charlotte's head on her lap. The thick brown tresses were falling over the child's white night-dress, and she lay almost motionless, and sobbing feebly. "Ah, it is you, general!" said madame. "You have done a pretty work, sir!" "Mamma says, won't you take something, Charlotte, dear?" faltered the old man. "Will you leave her tranquil?" said madame, with her deep voice. The father retreated. When madame went out presently to get that panacea, *une tasse de thé*, for her poor little friend, she found the old gentleman seated on a portmanteau at his door. "Is she—is she a little better now?" he sobbed out. Madame shrugged her shoulders, and looked down on the veteran with superb scorn. "*Vous n'êtes qu'un poltron, général!*" she said, and swept downstairs. Baynes was beaten indeed. He was suffering horrible pain. He was quite unmanned, and tears were trickling down his old cheeks as he sat wretchedly there in the dark. His wife did not leave the table as long as dinner and dessert lasted. She read Galignani resolutely afterwards. She told the children not to make a noise, as their sister was upstairs with a bad headache. But she revoked that statement as it were (as she revoked at cards presently), by asking the Miss Bolderos to play one of their duets.

I wonder whether Philip walked up and down before the house that night? Ah! it was a dismal night for all of them: a racking pain, a cruel sense of shame, throbbed under Baynes's cotton tassel; and as for Mrs. Baynes, I hope there was not much rest or comfort under *her* old nightcap. Madame passed the greater part of the night in a great chair in Charlotte's bed-room, where the poor child heard the hours toll one after the other, and found no comfort in the dreary rising of the dawn.

At a very early hour of the dismal rainy morning, what made poor little Charlotte fling her arms round madame, and cry out, "*Ah, que je vous aime! ah, que vous êtes bonne, madame!*" and smile almost happily

through her tears? In the first place, madame went to Charlotte's dressing-table, whence she took a pair of scissors. Then the little maid sat up on her bed, with her brown hair clustering over her shoulders; and madame took a lock of it, and cut a thick curl; and kissed poor little Charlotte's red eyes; and laid her pale cheek on the pillow, and carefully covered her; and bade her, with many tender words, to go to sleep. "If you are very good, and will go to sleep, he shall have it in half an hour," madame said. "And as I go downstairs, I will tell Françoise to have some tea ready for you when you ring." And this promise, and the thought of what madame was going to do, comforted Charlotte in her misery. And with many fond, fond prayers for Philip, and consoled by thinking, "Now she must have gone the greater part of the way; now she must be with him; now he knows I will never, never love any but him," she fell asleep at length on her moistened pillow: and was smiling in her sleep, and I daresay dreaming of Philip, when the noise of the fall of a piece of furniture roused her, and she awoke out of her dream to see the grim old mother, in her white nightcap and white dressing-gown, standing by her side.

Never mind. "She has seen him now. She has told him now," was the child's very first thought as her eyes fairly opened. "He knows that I never, never will think of any but him." She felt as if she was actually there in Philip's room, speaking herself to him; murmuring vows which her fond lips had whispered many and many a time to her lover. And now he knew she would never break them, she was consoled and felt more courage.

"You have had some sleep, Charlotte?" asks Mrs. Baynes.

"Yes, I have been asleep, mamma." As she speaks, she feels under the pillow a little locket containing—what? I suppose a scrap of Mr. Philip's lank hair.

"I hope you are in a less wicked frame of mind than when I left you last night," continues the matron.

"Was I wicked for loving Philip? Then I am wicked still, mamma!" cries the child, sitting up in her bed. And she clutches that little lock of hair which nestles under her pillow.

"What nonsense, child! This is what you get out of your stupid novels. I tell you he does not think about you. He is quite a reckless, careless libertine."

"Yes, so reckless and careless that we owe him the bread we eat. He doesn't think of me! Doesn't he? Ah—" Here she paused as a clock in a neighbouring chamber began to strike. "Now," she thought, "he has got my message!" A smile dawned over her face. She sank back on her pillow, turning her head from her mother. She kissed the locket, and murmured: "Not think of me! Don't you, don't you, my dear!" She did not heed the woman by her side, hear her voice, or for a moment seem aware of her presence. Charlotte was away in Philip's room; she saw him talking with her messenger; heard his voice so deep, and so sweet; knew that the promises he had spoken he never would break.

With gleaming eyes and flushing cheeks she looked at her mother, her enemy. She held her talisman locket and pressed it to her heart. No, she would never be untrue to him! No, he would never, never desert her! And as Mrs. Baynes looked at the honest indignation beaming in the child's face, she read Charlotte's revolt, defiance, perhaps victory. The meek child who never before had questioned an order, or formed a wish which she would not sacrifice at her mother's order, was now in arms asserting independence. But I should think mamma is not going to give up the command after a single act of revolt; and that she will try more attempts than one to cajole or coerce her rebel.

Meanwhile let Fancy leave the talisman locket nestling on Charlotte's little heart (in which soft shelter methinks it were pleasant to linger). Let her wrap a shawl round her, and affix to her feet a pair of stout goloshes; let her walk rapidly through the muddy Champs Elysées, where, in this inclement season, only a few policemen and artisans are to be found moving. Let her pay a halfpenny at the Pont des Invalides, and so march stoutly along the quays, by the Chamber of Deputies, where as yet deputies assemble: and trudge along the river side, until she reaches Seine Street, into which, as you all know, the Rue Poussin debouches. This was the road brave Madame Smolensk took on a gusty, rainy autumn morning, and on foot, for five-franc pieces were scarce with the good woman. Before the Hôtel Poussin (*ah, qu'on y était bien à vingt ans!*) is a little painted wicket which opens, ringing, and then there is the passage, you know, with the stair leading to the upper regions, to Monsieur Philippe's room, which is on the first floor, as is that of Bouchard, the painter, who has his atelier over the way. A bad painter is Bouchard, but a worthy friend, a cheery companion, a modest, amiable gentleman. And a rare good fellow is Laberge of the second floor, the poet from Carcassonne, who pretends to be studying law, but whose heart is with the Muses, and whose talk is of Victor Hugo and Alfred de Musset, whose verses he will repeat to all comers. Near Laberge (I think I have heard Philip say) lived Escasse, a Southern man too—a capitalist—a clerk in a bank, *quoi!*—whose apartment was decorated sumptuously with his own furniture, who had Spanish wine and sausages in cupboards, and a bag of dollars for a friend in need. Is Escasse alive still? Philip Firmin wonders, and that old colonel, who lived on the same floor, and who had been a prisoner in England? What wonderful descriptions that Colonel Dujarret had of *les meess anglaïses* and their singularities of dress and behaviour! Though conquered and a prisoner, what a conqueror and enslaver he was, when in our country! You see, in his rough way, Philip used to imitate these people to his friends, and we almost fancied we could see the hotel before us. It was very clean; it was very cheap; it was very dark; it was very cheerful;—capital coffee and bread-and-butter for breakfast for fifteen sous; capital bedroom *au premier* for thirty francs a month—dinner if you would for I forget how little, and a merry talk round the pipes and the grog afterwards—the grog, or the modest *eau sucrée*. Here

Colonel Dujarret recorded his victories over both sexes. Here Colonel Tymowski sighed over his enslaved Poland. Tymowski was the second who was to act for Philip, in case the Ringwood Twysden affair should have come to any violent conclusion. Here Laberge bawled poetry to Philip, who no doubt in his turn confided to the young Frenchman his own hopes and passion. Deep into the night he would sit talking of his love, of her goodness, of her beauty, of her innocence, of her dreadful mother, of her good old father—*que sais-je?* Have we not said that when this man had anything on his mind, straightway he bellowed forth his opinions to the universe? Philip, away from his love, would roar out her praises for hours and hours to Laberge, until the candles burned down, until the hour for rest was come and could be delayed no longer. Then he would hie to bed with a prayer for her; and the very instant he awoke begin to think of her, and bless her, and thank God for her love. Poor as Mr. Philip was, yet as the possessor of health, content, honour, and that priceless pure jewel the girl's love, I think we will not pity him much; though, on the night when he received his dismissal from Mrs. Baynes, he must have passed an awful time, to be sure. Toss, Philip, on your bed of pain, and doubt, and fear. Toll, heavy hours, from night till dawn. Ah! 'twas a weary night through which two sad young hearts heard you tolling.

At a pretty early hour the various occupants of the crib at the Rue Poussin used to appear in the dingy little *salle-à-manger*, and partake of the breakfast there provided. Monsieur Menou, in his shirt-sleeves, shared and distributed the meal. Madame Menou, with a Madras handkerchief round her grizzling head, laid down the smoking coffee on the shining oil-cloth, whilst each guest helped himself out of a little museum of napkins to his own particular towel. The room was small: the breakfast was not fine: the guests who partook of it were certainly not remarkable for the luxury of clean linen; but Philip—who is many years older now than when he dwelt in this hotel, and is not pinched for money at all, you will be pleased to hear, (and between ourselves has become rather a gourmand,)—declares he was a very happy youth at this humble Hôtel Poussin, and sighs for the days when he was sighing for Miss Charlotte.

Well, he has passed a dreadful night of gloom and terror. I doubt that he has bored Laberge very much with his tears and despondency. And now morning has come, and, as he is having his breakfast with one or more of the before-named worthies, the little boy-of-all-work enters, grinning, his *plumet* under his arm, and cries "*Une dame pour M. Philippe!*"

"*Une dame,*" says the French colonel, looking up from his paper; "*allez, mauvais sujet!*"

"*Grand Dieu!* what has happened?" cries Philip, running forward, as he recognizes madame's tall figure in the passage. They go up to his room, I suppose, regardless of the grins and sneers of the little boy with the *plumet*, who aids the maid-servant to make the beds; and who thinks Monsieur Philippe has a very elderly acquaintance.

Philip closes the door upon his visitor, who looks at him with so much hope, kindness, confidence in her eyes, that the poor fellow is encouraged almost ere she begins to speak. "Yes, you have reason; I come from the little person," Madame Smolensk said; "the means of resisting that poor dear angel! She has passed a sad night. What? You, too, have not been to bed, poor young man!" Indeed Philip had only thrown himself on his bed, and had kicked there, and had groaned there, and had tossed there; and had tried to read, and, I daresay, remembered afterwards, with a strange interest, the book he read, and that other thought which was throbbing in his brain all the time whilst he was reading, and whilst the wakeful hours went wearily tolling by.

"No, in effect," says poor Philip, rolling a dismal cigarette; "the night has not been too fine. And she has suffered too? Heaven bless her!" And then Madame Smolensk told how the little dear angel had cried all the night long, and how the Smolensk had not succeeded in comforting her, until she promised she would go to Philip, and tell him that his Charlotte would be his for ever and ever; that she never could think of any man but him; that he was the best, and the dearest, and the bravest, and the truest Philip, and that she did not believe one word of those wicked stories told against him by—"Hold, Monsieur Philippe, I suppose Madame la Générale has been talking about you, and loves you no more," cried Madame Smolensk. "We other women are assassins—assassins, see you! But Madame la Générale went too far with the little maid. She is an obedient little maid, the dear Miss!—trembling before her mother, and always ready to yield—only now her spirit is roused; and she is yours and yours only. The little dear, gentle child! Ah, how pretty she was, leaning on my shoulder. I held her there—yes, there, my poor garçon, and I cut this from her neck, and brought it to thee. Come, embrace me. Weep; that does good, Philip. I love thee well. Go—and thy little—It is an angel!" And so, in the hour of their pain, myriads of manly hearts have found woman's love ready to soothe their anguish.

Leaving to Philip that thick curling lock of brown hair, (from a head where now, mayhap, there is a line or two of matron silver,) this Samaritan plods her way back to her own house, where her own cares await her. But though the way is long, madame's step is lighter now, as she thinks how Charlotte at the journey's end is waiting for news of Philip; and I suppose there are more kisses and embraces, when the good soul meets with the little suffering girl, and tells her how Philip will remain for ever true and faithful; and how true love must come to a happy ending; and how she, Smolensk, will do all in her power to aid, comfort, and console her young friends. As for the writer of Mr. Philip's memoirs, you see I never try to make any concealments. I have told you, all along, that Charlotte and Philip are married, and I believe they are happy. But it is certain that they suffered dreadfully at this time of their lives; and my wife says that Charlotte, if she alludes to the

period and the trial, speaks as though they had both undergone some hideous operation, the remembrance of which for ever causes a pang to the memory. So, my young lady, will you have your trial one day, to be borne, pray Heaven, with a meek spirit. Ah, how surely the turn comes to all of us! Look at Madame Smolensk at her luncheon-table, this day after her visit to Philip at his lodging, after comforting little Charlotte in her pain. How brisk she is! How good-natured! How she smiles! How she speaks to all her company, and carves for her guests! You do not suppose she has no griefs and cares of her own? You know better. I daresay she is thinking of her creditors; of her poverty; of that accepted bill which will come due next week, and so forth. The Samaritan who rescues you, most likely, has been robbed and has bled in his day, and it is a wounded arm that bandages yours when bleeding.

If Anatole, the boy who scoured the plain at the Hôtel Poussin, with his *plumet* in his jacket-pocket, and his slippers soled with scrubbing brushes, saw the embrace between Philip and his good friend, I believe, in his experience at that hotel, he never witnessed a transaction more honourable, generous, and blameless. Put what construction you will on the business, Anatole, you little imp of mischief! your mother never gave you a kiss more tender than that which Madame Smolensk bestowed on Philip—than that which she gave Philip?—than that which she carried back from him and faithfully placed on poor little Charlotte's pale round cheek. The world is full of love and pity, I say. Had there been less suffering, there would have been less kindness. I, for one, almost wish to be ill again, so that the friends who succoured me might once more come to my rescue.

To poor little wounded Charlotte in her bed, our friend the mistress of the boarding-house brought back inexpressible comfort. Whatever might betide, Philip would never desert her! "Think you I would ever have gone on such an embassy for a French girl, or interfered between her and her parents?" madame asked. "Never, never! But you and Monsieur Philippe are already betrothed before Heaven; and I should despise you, Charlotte, I should despise him, were either to draw back." This little point being settled in Miss Charlotte's mind, I can fancy she is immensely soothed and comforted; that hope and courage settle in her heart; that the colour comes back to her young cheeks; that she can come and join her family as she did yesterday. "I told you she never cared about him," says Mrs. Baynes to her husband. "Faith, no: she can't have cared for him much," says Baynes, with something of a sorrow that his girl should be so light-minded. But you and I, who have been behind the scenes, who have peeped into Philip's bedroom and behind poor Charlotte's modest curtains, know that the girl had revolted from her parents; and so children will if the authority exercised over them is too tyrannical or unjust. Gentle Charlotte, who scarce ever resisted, was aroused and in rebellion: honest Charlotte, who used to speak all her thoughts, now hid them, and

deceived father and mother :—yes, deceived :—what a confession to make regarding a young lady, the *prima donna* of our opera ! Mrs. Baynes is, as usual, writing her lengthy scrawls to sister MacWhirter at Tours, and informs the major's lady that she has very great satisfaction in at last being able to announce "that that most imprudent and in all respects ineligible engagement between her Charlotte and a *certain young man*, son of a bankrupt London physician, is come to an end. Mr. F.'s conduct has been so wild, so *gross*, so *disorderly* and *ungentlemanlike*, that the general (and you know, Maria, how soft and *sweet a tempered* man Baynes is) has told Mr. Firmin his opinion in unmistakeable words, and forbidden him to continue his visits. After seeing him every day for six months, during which time she has accustomed herself to his peculiarities, and his often coarse and odious expressions and conduct, no wonder the separation has been a shock to dear Char, though I believe the young man feels nothing who has been *the cause of all this grief*. That he cares but little for *her*, has been my opinion *all along*, though she, artless child, gave him her whole affection. He has been accustomed to throw over women; and the brother of a young lady whom Mr. F. *had courted and left* (and who has made a most excellent match since,) showed his indignation at Mr. F.'s conduct at the embassy ball the other night, on which the young man took advantage of his greatly superior size and strength to begin a *vulgar boxing-match*, in which both parties were severely wounded. Of course you saw the paragraph in *Galignani* about the whole affair. I sent our dresses, but it did not print them, though our names appeared as amongst the company. Anything more singular than the appearance of Mr. F. you cannot well imagine. I wore my garnets; Charlotte (who attracted universal admiration) was in, &c. &c. Of course, the separation has occasioned her a good deal of pain; for Mr. F. certainly behaved with much kindness and forbearance on a previous occasion. But the general will *not hear* of the continuance of the connection. He says the young man's conduct has been too gross and shameful; and when once roused, you know, I might as well attempt to chain a tiger as Baynes. Our poor Char will suffer no doubt in consequence of the behaviour of this brute, but she has ever been an obedient child, who knows how to honour her father and mother. *She bears up wonderfully*, though, of course, the dear child suffers at the parting. I think if *she were to go to you and MacWhirter at Tours for a month or two*, she would be all the better for *change of air*, too, dear Mac. Come and fetch her, and we will pay the *dawk*. She would go to certain poverty and wretchedness did she marry this most violent and disreputable young man. The general sends regards to Mac, and I am," &c.

That these were the actual words of Mrs. Baynes's letter I cannot, as a veracious biographer, take upon myself to say. I never saw the document, though I have had the good fortune to peruse others from the same hand. Charlotte saw the letter some time after, upon one of those not unfrequent occasions, when a quarrel occurred between the two sisters—Mrs. Major

and Mrs. General—and Charlotte mentioned the contents of the letter to a friend of mine who has talked to me about his affairs, and especially his love affairs, for many and many a long hour. And shrewd old woman as Mrs. Baynes may be, you may see how utterly she was mistaken in fancying that her daughter's obedience was still secure. The little maid had left father and mother, at first with their eager sanction; her love had been given to Firmin; and an inmate—a prisoner if you will—under her father's roof, her heart remained with Philip, however time or distance might separate them.

And now, as we have the command of Philip's desk, and are free to open and read the private letters which relate to his history, I take leave to put in a document which was penned in his place of exile by his worthy father, upon receiving the news of the quarrel described in the last chapter of these memoirs:—

“Astor House, New York, September 27.

“DEAR PHILIP,—I received the news in your last kind and affectionate letter with not unmingled pleasure: but ah, what pleasure in life does not carry its *amari aliquid* along with it! That you are hearty, cheerful, and industrious, earning a small competence, I am pleased indeed to think: that you talk about being married to a penniless girl I can't say gives me a very sincere pleasure. With your good looks, good manners, attainments, you might have hoped for a better match than a half-pay officer's daughter. But 'tis useless speculating on what might have been. We are puppets in the hands of fate, most of us. We are carried along by a power stronger than ourselves. It has driven me, at sixty years of age, from competence, general respect, high position, to poverty and exile. So be it! *laudo manentem*, as my delightful old friend and philosopher teaches me—*si celeres quatit pennas*——you know the rest. Whatever our fortune may be, I hope that my Philip and his father will bear it with the courage of gentlemen.

“Our papers have announced the death of your poor mother's uncle, Lord Ringwood, and I had a fond lingering hope that he might have left some token of remembrance to his brother's grandson. He has not. You have *probam pauperiem sine dote*. You have courage, health, strength, and talent. I was in greater straits than you are at your age. My father was not as indulgent as yours, I hope and trust, has been. From debt and dependence I worked myself up to a proud position by my own efforts. That the storm overtook me and engulfed me afterwards, is true. But I am like the merchant of my favourite poet: I still hope—ay, at 63!—to mend my shattered ships, *indocilis pauperiem pati*. I still hope to pay back to my dear boy that fortune which ought to have been his, and which wept down in my own shipwreck. Something tells me I must—I will!

“I agree with you that your escape from Agnes Twysden has been a *piece of good fortune for you*, and am much diverted by your account of her *dusky innamorato*! Between ourselves, the fondness of the Twysdens for money amounted to meanness. And though I always received Twysden

in dear old Parr Street, as I trust a gentleman should, his company was insufferably tedious to me, and his vulgar loquacity odious. His son also was little to my taste. Indeed I was *heartily relieved* when I found your connection with that family was over, knowing their rapacity about money, and that it was your fortune, not you, they were anxious to secure for Agnes.

"You will be glad to hear that I am in not inconsiderable practice already. My reputation as a physician had preceded me to this country. My work on Gout was favourably noticed here, and in Philadelphia, and in Boston, by the scientific journals of those great cities. People are more generous and compassionate towards misfortune here than in our cold-hearted island. I could mention several gentlemen of New York who have suffered shipwreck like myself, and are now prosperous and respected. I had the good fortune to be of considerable professional service to Colonel J. B. Fogle, of New York, on our voyage out; and the colonel, who is a leading personage here, has shown himself not at all ungrateful. Those who fancy that at New York people cannot appreciate and understand the manners of a gentleman, are *not a little mistaken*; and a man who, like myself, has lived with the best society in London, has, I flatter myself, not lived in that society *quite in vain*. The colonel is proprietor and editor of one of the most brilliant and influential journals of the city. You know that arms and the toga are often worn here by the same individual, and——

"I had actually written thus far when I read in the colonel's paper—the *New York Emerald*—an account of your battle with your cousin at the Embassy ball! Oh, you pugnacious Philip! Well, young Twysden was very vulgar, very rude and overbearing, and, I have no doubt, deserved the chastisement you gave him. By the way, the correspondent of the *Emerald* makes some droll blunders regarding you in his letter. We are all fair game for publicity in this country, where the press is free *with a vengeance*; and your private affairs, or mine, or the President's, or our gracious Queen's, for the matter of that, are discussed with a freedom which certainly *amounts to licence*. The colonel's lady is passing the winter in Paris, where I should wish you to pay your respects to her. Her husband has been most kind to me. I am told that Mrs. F. lives in the very choicest French society, and the friendship of this family may be useful to you as to your affectionate father,

"G. B. F.

"Address as usual, until you hear further from me, as Dr. Brandon, New York. I wonder whether Lord Estridge has asked you after his old college friend? When he was Headbury and at Trinity, he and a certain pensioner whom men used to nickname Brummell Firmin were said to be the best dressed men in the university. Estridge has advanced to rank, to honours! You may rely on it, that he will have one of the *very next* vacant garters. What a different, what an unfortunate career, has been his quondam friend's!—an exile, an inhabitant of a small room in a great

hotel, where I sit at a scrambling public table with all sorts of coarse people! The way in which they bolt their dinner, often *with a knife*, shocks me. Your remittance was most welcome, small as it was. It shows my Philip has a *kind heart*. Ah! why, why are you thinking of marriage, who are so poor? By the way, your encouraging account of your circumstances has induced me to draw upon you for 100 dollars. The bill will go to Europe by the packet which carries this letter, and has kindly been cashed for me by my friends, Messrs. Plaster and Shinman, of Wall Street, respected bankers of this city. Leave your card with Mrs. Fogle. Her husband himself may be useful to you and your ever attached

"FATHER."

We take the *New York Emerald* at Bays's, and in it I had read a very amusing account of our friend Philip, in an ingenious correspondence entitled "*Letters from an Attaché*," which appeared in that journal. I even copied the paragraph to show to my wife, and perhaps to forward to our friend.

"I promise you," wrote the attaché, "the new country did not disgrace the old at the British Embassy ball on Queen Vic's birthday. Colonel Z. B. Hoggins's lady, of Albany, and the peerless bride of Elijah J. Dibbs, of Twenty-ninth Street in your city, were the observed of all observers for splendour, for elegance, for refined native beauty. The Royal Dukes danced with nobody else; and at the attention of one of the Princes to the lovely Miss Dibbs, I observed his Royal Duchess looked as black as thunder. Supper handsome. Back Delmonico to beat it. Champagne so so. By the way, the young fellow who writes here for the *Pall Mall Gazette* got too much of the champagne on board—as usual, I am told. The Honourable R. Twysden, of London, was rude to my young chap's partner, or winked at him offensively, or trod on his toe, or I don't know what—but young F. followed him into the garden; hit out at him; sent him flying, like a spread eagle into the midst of an illumination, and left him there sprawling. Wild, rampageous fellow this young F., has already spent his own fortune, and ruined his poor old father, who has been forced to cross the water. Old Louis Philippe went away early. He talked long with our minister about his travels in our country. 'I was standing by, but in course ain't so ill-bred as to say what passed between them.'"

In this way history is written. I daresay about others besides Philip, in English papers as well as American, have fables been narrated.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONTAINS A TUG OF WAR.



HO was the first to spread the report that Philip was a prodigal who had ruined his poor confiding father? I thought I knew a person who might be interested in getting under any shelter, and sacrificing even his own son for his own advantage. I thought I knew a man who had done as much already, and surely might do so again; but my wife flew into one of her tempests of indignation, when I hinted something of this, clutched her own children

to her heart, according to her maternal wont, asked me was there any power would cause me to belie *them*? and sternly rebuked me for daring to be so wicked, heartless, and cynical. My dear creature, wrath is no answer. You call me heartless and cynic, for saying men are false and wicked. Have you never heard to what lengths some bankrupts will go? To appease the wolves who chase them in the winter forest, have you not read how some travellers will cast all their provisions out of the sledge? then, when all the provisions are gone, don't you know that they will fling out perhaps the sister, perhaps the mother, perhaps the baby, the little, dear, tender innocent? Don't you see him tumbling among the howling pack, and the wolves gnashing, gnawing, crashing, gobbling him up in the snow? O horror—horror! My wife draws all the young ones to her breast as I utter these fiendish remarks. She hugs them in her embrace, and says, "For shame!" and that I am a monster, and so on. Go to! Go down on your knees, woman, and acknowledge the sinfulness of our humankind. How long had our race existed ere murder and violence began? and how old was the world ere brother slew brother?

Well, my wife and I came to a compromise. I might have my opinion, but was there any need to communicate it to poor Philip? No, surely. So I never sent him the extract from the *New York Emerald*; though, of course, some other good-natured friend did, and I don't think my magnanimous friend cared much. As for supposing that his own father, to cover his own character, would lie away his son's—such a piece of artifice was quite beyond Philip's comprehension, who has been all his life slow in appreciating roguery, or recognizing that there is meanness and double-dealing in the world. When he once comes to

understand the fact; when he once comprehends that Tartuffe is a humbug and swelling Bufo is a toady; then my friend becomes as absurdly indignant and mistrustful as before he was admiring and confiding. Ah, Philip! Tartuffe has a number of good, respectable qualities; and Bufo, though an underground odious animal, may have a precious jewel in his head. 'Tis you are cynical. I see the good qualities in these rascals whom you spurn. I see. I shrug my shoulders. I smile: and you call me cynic.

It was long before Philip could comprehend why Charlotte's mother turned upon him, and tried to force her daughter to forsake him. "I have offended the old woman in a hundred ways," he would say. "My tobacco annoys her; my old clothes offend her; the very English I speak is often Greek to her, and she can no more construe my sentences than I can the Hindostanee jargon she talks to her husband at dinner." "My dear fellow, if you had ten thousand a year she would try and construe your sentences, or accept them even if not understood," I would reply. And some men, whom you and I know to be mean, and to be false, and to be flatterers and parasites, and to be inexorably hard and cruel in their own private circles, will surely pull a long face to-morrow, and say, "Oh! the man's so cynical."

I acquit Baynes of what ensued. I hold Mrs. B. to have been the criminal—the stupid criminal. The husband, like many other men extremely brave in active life, was at home timid and irresolute. Of two heads that lie side by side on the same pillow for thirty years, one must contain the stronger power, the more enduring resolution. Baynes, away from his wife, was shrewd, courageous, gay at times; when with her he was fascinated, torpid under the power of this baleful superior creature. "Ah, when we were subs together in camp in 1803, what a lively fellow Charley Baynes was!" his comrade, Colonel Bunch, would say. "That was before he ever saw his wife's yellow face; and what a slave she has made of him!"

After that fatal conversation which ensued on the day succeeding the ball, Philip did not come to dinner at madame's according to his custom. Mrs. Baynes told no family stories, and Colonel Bunch, who had no special liking for the young gentleman, did not trouble himself to make any inquiries about him. One, two, three days passed, and no Philip. At last the colonel says to the general, with a sly look at Charlotte, "Baynes, where is our young friend with the mustachios? We have not seen him these three days." And he gives an arch look at poor Charlotte. A burning blush flamed up in little Charlotte's pale face, as she looked at her parents and then at their old friend. "Mr. Firmin does not come, because papa and mamma have forbidden him," says Charlotte. "I suppose he only comes where he is welcome." And, having made this audacious speech, I suppose the little maid tossed her little head up; and wondered, in the silence which ensued, whether all the company could hear her heart thumping.

Madame, from her central place, where she is carving, sees, from the looks of her guests, the indignant flushes on Charlotte's face, the confusion on her father's, the wrath on Mrs. Baynes's, that some dreadful words are passing; and in vain endeavours to turn the angry current of talk. "*Un petit canard délicieux, goûtez-en, madame!*" she cries. Honest Colonel Bunch sees the little maid with eyes flashing with anger, and trembling in every limb. The offered duck having failed to create a diversion, he, too, tries a feeble commonplace. "A little difference, my dear," he says in an under voice. "There will be such in the best regulated families. *Canard sauvage tres bon, madame, avec—*" but he is allowed to speak no more, for—

"What would you do, Colonel Bunch," little Charlotte breaks out with her poor little ringing, trembling voice—"that is, if you were a young man, if another young man struck you, and insulted you?" I say she utters this in such a clear voice, that Françoise, the *femme-de-chambre*, that Auguste, the footman, that all the guests hear, that all the knives and forks stop their clatter.

"Faith, my dear, I'd knock him down if I could," says Bunch; and he catches hold of the little maid's sleeve, and would stop her speaking if he could.

"And that is what Philip did," cries Charlotte aloud; "and mamma has turned him out of the house—yes, out of the house, for acting like a man of honour!"

"Go to your room this instant, miss!" shrieks mamma. As for old Baynes, his stained old uniform is not more dingy-red than his wrinkled face and his throbbing temples. He blushes under his wig, no doubt, could we see beneath that ancient artifice.

"What is it? madame your mother dismisses you of my table? I will come with you, my dear Miss Charlotte!" says madame, with much dignity. "Serve the sugared plate, Auguste! My ladies, you will excuse me! I go to attend the dear miss, who seems to me ill." And she rises up, and she follows poor little blushing, burning, weeping Charlotte: and again, I have no doubt, takes her in her arms, and kisses, and cheers, and caresses her—at the threshold of the door—there by the staircase, among the cold dishes of the dinner, where Moira and Macgrigor had one moment before been marauding.

"*Courage, ma fille, courage, mon enfant! Tenez!* Behold something to console thee!" and madame takes out of her pocket a little letter, and gives it to the girl, who at sight of it kisses the superscription, and then in an anguish of love, and joy, and grief, falls on the neck of the kind woman, who consoles her in her misery. Whose writing is it Charlotte kisses? Can you guess by any means? Upon my word, Madame Smolensk, I never recommend ladies to take daughters to *your* boarding-house. And I like you so much, I would not tell of you, but you know the house is shut up this many a long day. Oh! the years slip away fugacious; and the grass has grown over graves; and many and many joys and

sorrows have been born and have died since then for Charlotte and Philip: but that grief aches still in their bosoms at times; and that sorrow throbs at Charlotte's heart again whenever she looks at a little yellow letter in her trinket-box: and she says to her children, "Papa wrote that to me before we were married, my dears." There are scarcely half-a-dozen words in the little letter, I believe; and two of them are "for ever."

I could draw a ground-plan of madame's house in the Champs Elysées if I liked, for has not Philip shown me the place and described it to me many times? In front, and facing the road and garden, were madame's room and the salon; to the back was the *salle-à-manger*; and a stair ran up the house (where the dishes used to be laid during dinner-time, and where Moira and Macgrigor fingered the meats and puddings). Mrs. General Baynes's rooms were on the third floor, looking on the Champs Elysées, and into the garden-court of the house below. And on this day, as the dinner was necessarily short (owing to unhappy circumstances), and the gentlemen were left alone glumly drinking their wine or grog, and Mrs. Baynes had gone upstairs to her own apartment, had slapped her boys and was looking out of window—was it not provoking that of all days in the world young Hely should ride up to the house on his capering mare, with his flower in his button-hole, with his little varnished toe-tips just touching his stirrups, and after performing various caracolades and gambadoes in the garden, kiss his yellow-kidded hand to Mrs. General Baynes at the window, hope Miss Baynes was quite well, and ask if he might come in and take a cup of tea? Charlotte, lying on madame's bed in the ground-floor room, heard Mr. Hely's sweet voice asking after her health, and the crunching of his horse's hoofs on the gravel, and she could even catch glimpses of that little form as the horse capered about in the court, though of course he could not see her where she was lying on the bed with her letter in her hand. Mrs. Baynes at her window had to wag her withered head from the casement, to groan out, "My daughter is lying down, and has a bad headache, I am sorry to say," and then she must have had the mortification to see Hely caper off, after waving her a genteel adieu. The ladies in the front salon, who assembled after dinner, witnessed the transaction, and Mrs. Bunch, I daresay, had a grim pleasure at seeing Eliza Baynes's young sprig of fashion, of whom Eliza was for ever bragging, come at last, and obliged to ride away, not bootless, certainly, for where were feet more beautifully *chaussés*? but after a bootless errand.

Meanwhile the gentlemen sate awhile in the dining-room, after the British custom which such veterans liked too well to give up. Other two gentlemen boarders went away, rather alarmed by that storm and outbreak in which Charlotte had quitted the dinner-table, and left the old soldiers together, to enjoy, as was their after-dinner custom, a sober glass of "something hot," as the saying is. In truth, madame's wine was of the poorest; but what better could you expect for the money?

Baynes was not eager to be alone with Bunch, and I have no doubt began to blush again when he found himself *tête-à-tête* with his old friend. But what was to be done? The general did not dare to go up-stairs to his own quarters, where poor Charlotte was probably crying, and her mother in one of her tantrums. Then in the salon there were the ladies of the boarding-house party, and there Mrs. Bunch would be sure to be at him. Indeed, since the Baynes' were launched in the great world, Mrs. Bunch was untiringly sarcastic in her remarks about lords, ladies, attachés, ambassadors, and fine people in general. So Baynes sate with his friend, in the falling evening, in much silence, dipping his old nose in the brandy-and-water.

Little square-faced, red-faced, whisker-dyed Colonel Bunch sate opposite his old companion, regarding him not without scorn. Bunch had a wife. Bunch had feelings. Do you suppose those feelings had not been worked upon by that wife in private colloquies? Do you suppose—when two old women have lived together in pretty much the same rank of life,—if one suddenly gets promotion, is carried off to higher spheres, and talks of her new friends, the countesses, duchesses, ambassadresses, as of course she will—do you suppose, I say, that the unsuccessful woman will be pleased at the successful woman's success? Your knowledge of your own heart, my dear lady, must tell you the truth in this matter. I don't want you to acknowledge that you are angry because your sister has been staying with the Duchess of Fitzbattleaxe, but you are, you know. You have made sneering remarks to your husband on the subject, and such remarks, I have no doubt, were made by Mrs. Colonel Bunch to *her* husband, regarding her poor friend Mrs. General Baynes.

During this parenthesis we have left the general dipping his nose in the brandy-and-water. He can't keep it there for ever. He must come up for air presently. His face must come out of the drink, and sigh over the table.

"What's this business, Baynes?" says the colonel. "What's the matter with poor Charley?"

"Family affairs—differences will happen," says the general.

"I do hope and trust nothing has gone wrong with her and young Firmin, Baynes?"

The general does not like those fixed eyes staring at him under those bushy eyebrows, between those bushy, blackened whiskers.

"Well, then, yes, Bunch, something *has* gone wrong; and given me and—and Mrs. Baynes—a deuced deal of pain too. The young fellow has acted like a blackguard, brawling and fighting at an ambassador's ball, bringing us all to ridicule. He's not a gentleman; that's the long and short of it, Bunch; and so let's change the subject."

"Why, consider the provocation he had!" cries the other, disregarding entirely his friend's prayer. "I heard them talking about the business at Galignani's this very day. A fellow swears at Firmin; runs at him; brags that he has pitched him over; and is knocked down for his

pains. By George! I think Firmin was quite right. Were any man to do as much to me or you, what should we do, even at our age?"

"We are military men. I said I didn't wish to talk about the subject, Bunch," says the general in rather a lofty manner.

"You mean that Tom Bunch has no need to put his oar in?"

"Precisely so," says the other, curtly.

"Mum's the word! Let us talk about the dukes and duchesses at the ball. *That's* more in your line, now," says the colonel, with rather a sneer.

"What do you mean by duchesses and dukes? What do you know about them, or what the deuce do I care?" asks the general.

"Oh, they are tabooed too! Hang it! there's no satisfying you," growls the colonel.

"Look here, Bunch," the general broke out; "I must speak, since you won't leave me alone. I am unhappy. You can see that well enough. For two or three nights past I have had no rest. This engagement of my child and Mr. Firmin can't come to any good. You see what he is—an overbearing, ill-conditioned, quarrelsome fellow. What chance has Charley of being happy with such a fellow?"

"I hold my tongue, Baynes. You told me not to put my oar in," growls the colonel.

"Oh, if that's the way you take it, Bunch, of course there's no need for me to go on any more," cries General Baynes. "If an old friend won't give an old friend advice, by George, or help him in a strait, or say a kind word when he's unhappy, I have done. I have known you for forty years, and I am mistaken in you—that's all."

"There's no contenting you. You say, Hold your tongue, and I shut my mouth. I hold my tongue, and you say, Why don't you speak? Why don't I? Because you won't like what I say, Charles Baynes: and so, what's the good of more talking?"

"Confound it!" cries Baynes, with a thump of his glass on the table, "but what *do* you say?"

"I say, then, as you will have it," cries the other, clenching his fists in his pockets,—“I say you are wanting a pretext for breaking off this match, Baynes. I don't say it is a good one, mind; but your word is passed, and your honour engaged to a young fellow to whom you are under deep obligation.”

"What obligation? Who has talked to you about my private affairs?" cries the general, reddening. "Has Philip Firmin been bragging about his——?"

"You have yourself, Baynes. When you arrived here, you told me over and over again what the young fellow had done: and you certainly thought he acted like a gentleman *then*. If you choose to break your word to him now——"

"Break my word! Great powers, do you know what you are saying, Bunch?"

"Yes, and what you are doing, Baynes."

"Doing? and what?"

"A damned shabby action; that's what you are doing, if you want to know. Don't tell *me*. Why, do you suppose Fanny—do you suppose everybody doesn't see what you are at? You think you can get a better match for the girl, and you and Eliza are going to throw the young fellow over: and the fellow who held his hand, and might have ruined you if he liked. I say it is a cowardly action!"

"Colonel Bunch, do you dare to use such a word to me?" calls out the general, starting to his feet.

"Dare be hanged! I say it's a shabby action!" roars the other, rising too.

"Hush! unless you wish to disturb the ladies! Of course you know what your expression means, Colonel Bunch?" and the general drops his voice and sinks back to his chair.

"I know what my words mean, and I stick to 'em, Baynes," growls the other; "which is more than you can say of yours."

"I am dee'd if any man alive shall use this language to me," says the general in the softest whisper, "without accounting to me for it."

"Did you ever find me backward, Baynes, at that kind of thing?" growls the colonel, with a face like a lobster and eyes starting from his head.

"Very good, sir. To-morrow, at your earliest convenience. I shall be at Galignani's from eleven till one. With a friend if possible.—What is it, my love? A game at whist? Well, no, thank you; I think I won't play cards to-night."

It was Mrs. Baynes who entered the room when the two gentlemen were quarrelling; and the bloodthirsty hypocrites instantly smoothed their ruffled brows and smiled on her with perfect courtesy.

"Whist—no! I was thinking should we send out to meet him. He has never been in Paris."

"Never been in Paris?" said the general, puzzled.

"He will be here to-night, you know. Madame has a room ready for him."

"The very thing, the very thing!" cries General Baynes, with great glee. And Mrs. Baynes, all unsuspecting of the quarrel between the old friends, proceeds to inform Colonel Bunch that Major MacWhirter was expected that evening. And then that tough old Colonel Bunch knew the cause of Baynes's delight. A second was provided for the general—the very thing Baynes wanted.

We have seen how Mrs. Baynes, after taking counsel with her general, had privily sent for MacWhirter. Her plan was that Charlotte's uncle should take her for awhile to Tours, and make her hear reason. Then Charley's foolish passion for Philip would pass away. Then, if he dared to follow her so far, her aunt and uncle, two dragons of virtue and circumspection, would watch and guard her. Then, if Mrs. Hely was still of the same

mind, she and her son might easily take the post to Tours, where, Philip being absent, young Walsingham might plead his passion. The best part of the plan, perhaps, was the separation of our young couple. Charlotte would recover. Mrs. Baynes was sure of that. The little girl had made no outbreak until that sudden insurrection at dinner which we have witnessed; and her mother, who had domineered over the child all her life, thought she was still in her power. She did not know that she had passed the bounds of authority, and that with her behaviour to Philip her child's allegiance had revolted.

Bunch then, from Baynes's look and expression, perfectly understood what his adversary meant, and that the general's second was found. His own he had in his eye—a tough little old army surgeon of Peninsular and Indian times, who lived hard by, who would aid as second and doctor too, if need were—and so kill two birds with one stone, as they say. The colonel would go forth that very instant and seek for Dr. Martin, and be hanged to Baynes, and a plague on the whole transaction and the folly of two old friends burning powder in such a quarrel. But he knew what a bloodthirsty little fellow that henpecked, silent Baynes was when roused; and as for himself—a fellow use that kind of language to *me*? By George, Tom Bunch was not going to baulk him!

Whose was that tall figure prowling about madame's house in the Champs Elysées when Colonel Bunch issued forth in quest of his friend; who had been watched by the police and mistaken for a suspicious character; who had been looking up at madame's windows now that the evening shades had fallen? Oh, you goose of a Philip! (for of course, my dears, you guess the spy was P. F. Esq.) you look up at the *premier*, and there is the Beloved in madame's room on the ground floor;—in yonder room, where a lamp is burning and casting a faint light across the bars of the *jalousie*. If Philip knew she was there he would be transformed into a clematis, and climb up the bars of the window, and twine round them all night. But you see he thinks she is on the first floor; and the glances of his passionate eyes are taking aim at the wrong windows. And now Colonel Bunch comes forth in his stout strutting way, in his little military cape—quick march—and Philip is startled like a guilty thing surprised, and dodges behind a tree in the avenue.

The colonel departed on his murderous errand. Philip still continues to ogle the window of his heart (the wrong window), defiant of the policeman, who tells him to *circuler*. He has not watched here many minutes more, ere a hackney-coach drives up with portmanteaux on the roof and a lady and gentleman within.

You see Mrs. MacWhirter thought she as well as her husband might have a peep at Paris. As Mac's coach-hire was paid, Mrs. Mac could afford a little outlay of money. And if they were to bring Charlotte back—Charlotte in grief and agitation, poor child—a matron, an aunt, would be a much fitter companion for her than a major, however gentle. So the pair of MacWhirters journeyed from Tours—a long journey it was

before railways were invented—and after four-and-twenty hours of squeeze in the diligence, presented themselves at nightfall at Madame Smolensk's.

The Baynes' boys dashed into the garden at the sound of wheels. "Mamma—mamma! it's uncle Mac!" these innocents cried, as they ran to the railings. "Uncle Mac! what could bring him? Oh! they are going to send me to him! they are going to send me to him!" thought Charlotte, starting on her bed. And on this, I daresay, a certain locket was kissed more vehemently than ever.

"I say, ma!" cries the ingenuous Moira, jumping back to the house; it's uncle Mac, and aunt Mac, too!"

"What?" cries mamma, with anything but pleasure in her voice; and then turning to the dining-room, where her husband still ate, she called out, "General! here's MacWhirter and Emily!"

Mrs. Baynes gave her sister a very grim kiss.

"Dearest Eliza, I thought it was such a good opportunity of coming, and that I might be so useful, you know!" pleads Emily.

"Thank you. How do you do, MacWhirter?" says the grim générale.

"Glad to see you, Baynes, my boy!"

"How d'ye do, Emily? Boys, bring your uncle's traps. Didn't know Emily was coming, Mac. Hope there's room for her!" sighs the general, coming forth from his parlour.

The major was struck by the sad looks and pallor of his brother-in-law. "By George! Baynes, you look as yellow as a guinea. How's Tom Bunch?"

"Come into this room along with me. Have some brandy-and-water, Mac. "Auguste! *O de vie, O sho!*" calls the general; and Auguste, who out of the new comer's six packages has daintily taken one very small mackintosh cushion, says, "*Comment? encore du grog, général?*" and, shrugging his shoulders, disappears to procure the refreshment at his leisure.

The sisters disappear to their embraces; the brothers-in-law retreat to the *salle-à-manger*, where General Baynes has been sitting, gloomy and lonely, for half an hour past, thinking of his quarrel with his old comrade, Bunch. He and Bunch have been chums for more than forty years. They have been in action together, and honourably mentioned in the same report. They have had a great regard for each other; and each knows the other is an obstinate old mule, and, in a quarrel, will die rather than give way. They have had a dispute out of which there is only one issue. Words have passed which no man, however old, by George! can brook from any friend, however intimate, by Jove! No wonder Baynes is grave. His family is large; his means are small. To-morrow he may be under fire of an old friend's pistol. In such an extremity he knows how each will behave. No wonder, I say, the general is solemn.

"What's in the wind now, Baynes?" asks the major, after a little drink and a long silence. "How is poor little Char?"

"Infernally ill—I mean behaved infernally ill," says the general, biting his lips.

"Bad business! Bad business! Poor little child!" cries the major.

"Insubordinate little devil!" says the pale general, grinding his teeth. "We'll see which shall be master!"

"What! you have had words?"

"At this table, this very day. She sat here and defied her mother and me, by George! and flung out of the room like a tragedy queen. She must be tamed, Mac, or my name's not Baynes."

MacWhirter knew his relative of old, and that this quiet, submissive man, when angry, worked up to a white heat as it were. "Sad affair; hope you'll both come round, Baynes," sighs the major, trying bootless commonplaces; and seeing this last remark had no effect, he bethought him of recurring to their mutual friend. "How's Tom Bunch?" the major asked, cheerily.

At this question Baynes grinned in such a ghastly way that MacWhirter eyed him with wonder. "Colonel Bunch is very well," the general said, in dismal voice; "at least, he was, half an hour ago. He was sitting there;" and he pointed to an empty spoon lying in an empty beaker, whence the spirit and water had departed.

"What has been the matter, Baynes?" asked the major. "Has anything happened between you and Tom?"

"I mean that, half an hour ago, Colonel Bunch used words to me which I'll bear from no man alive: and you have arrived just in the nick of time, MacWhirter, to take my message to him. Hush! here's the drink."

"*Voici, Messieurs!*" Auguste at length has brought up a second supply of brandy-and-water. The veterans mingled their jorums; and whilst his brother-in-law spoke, the alarmed MacWhirter sipped occasionally *intentusque ora tenebat*.

The Tormentors and the Tormented.

To grind or be ground—to torment or be tormented—is the fate of considerably more than half of the human race. It has been so ever since the world began, and is likely to be so as long as that world endures. "The thing which has been shall be."

Now there is an immense amount of torture inflicted hourly, yet without malice, by the strong on the weak, by the weak on the strong, and by ourselves on ourselves. But apart from all this, there exists everywhere a separate and peculiar class of beings who are tormentors by nature, by custom, and by education. The individuals who belong to it are well known, much feared, and mostly hated; but, on the whole, people more often essay to propitiate than to exterminate them. "We love a man that damns us," says Selden, "and we run after him again to save us." We propose to chronicle a few of the characteristics of these social Tormentors; their plans of operation and their weapons of offence: to describe, as well as may be, the mechanism of their moral rack, and the principle and method of its working, so as to instruct those who desire to make themselves acquainted, either for the purpose of aggression or defence, with what has been termed the "art of ingeniously tormenting."

No Job ever yet came to grief that a Bildad was not forthcoming to cry—

"As the old crow said to the young crow—
"Did I not tell thee so?"

And the love of tormenting, as well as the capacity for being tormented, are so universal, that it is to be supposed the seeds thereof are sown deep in human nature. Owing to this fact, a tormentor is always sure of a numerous array of victims; and, what is of equal importance to him, a circle of attentive lookers on. Almost every one can torment his friend or enemy in a humble way, if he be so inclined; therefore none need despair: but those whom Nature destines to rise to greatness in the art, are distinguished by possessing that which is said to be the true attribute of genius, *i. e.* a character finely compounded of the masculine and the feminine. The tormentor who has a true call to the office, possesses either a calm, cool strength and keenness, or a hard, biting, sarcastic humour, together with the selfishness also pre-eminently characteristic of the class: as Eugène Sue describes it—"ce n'est pas chez lui une fonction, c'est une sacerdoce:" combined with these he has the lynx-like attention to minute details, the fine instinct for discerning the slightest sign of pain or suffering, the tenacity of purpose, the ingenuity of expedient, the swift thought, the swifter speech, and, lastly, the elastic cruelty of a woman. Genius is of no sex—or, as some say, of both sexes; therefore it is to be understood that wherever we use the word *he*, the reader may at his own

pleasure substitute for it the pronoun *she*, whenever the occasion seems to require it.

The Tormentor appears as one who speaks his mind.—As life is with him a problem how far he may stick his knees and toes into his neighbour's back without being turned out of this world-theatre, so it invariably happens that his mind is a disagreeable one to speak. You are ashamed not to appear able to bear telling the truth, and so submit; or perhaps you try to laugh it off. Laughter is some men's mode of crying; and to produce a spasmodic laugh of this kind is definite enjoyment to the professional tormentor. "He that hath ears to hear, let him stuff them with cotton wool," writes a philosopher too well known to need naming. "She thought it her duty to speak her mind, as it is called," says another writer; "and there is in this operation, when performed between women, especially where a man is more or less concerned, often a certain enjoyment."

It is recorded how a certain number of people weather-bound in a country house, and the women largely preponderating over the other sex, once proposed and agreed by unanimous resolution "to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," to each other. They called their abode the Palace of Truth, and they did as they said, with an energy and ingenuity wonderful to behold. Every sense was quickened; each eye was sharpened; daily their observations on each other's faults and infirmities grew more caustic and trenchant: they did indeed speak their minds, and those minds became more plain and direct in acid censure, until the state of discord and unpleasantness in this new crystal palace of candour was appalling, and the practice was perforce discontinued, lest the fair philosophers should let their words bring forth fruits, and so be in danger of forgetting Dr. Watts' pretty hymn—

"Your little hands were never made
To tear each other's eyes."

Without advocating *une société pour l'admiration mutuelle*, it would be a better thing than the league above described.

It is hardly necessary to point out to the physically strong in how many modes he may oppress and annoy others. Such a tormentor will smoke, for instance, on all occasions, but especially when he knows the smell renders any unlucky individual ill; in a party of pleasure he will over-walk every one else, cheering them on as long as possible if they will accommodate their pace to his, and then, if they break down when they can do no more, he triumphs over them for being so weak, and taunts them with reproaches, or offensive pity for not being stronger. If he discerns signs of timidity in a rider, it will be a great opportunity for the exercise of his art: he will recount the most terrible equestrian disasters, and when he has reduced his victim to a state of ungraceful terror, he will smilingly declare he was only joking. If it be a lady, he will intimate that ill-health only springs from self-indulgence, or that nervousness is

usually put on, and is simply affectation; by which means the thong is laid on pretty sharply, and the victim affords great sport; if the unfortunate be a man—and men are more often afraid than is generally supposed can be noticed by a lady at her leisure,—he will remark how ugly and mean a thing fear is in a man; and so increase the victim's discomfort. But the physically strong cannot thus oppress the physically weak to the utmost extent, unless the latter be morally weak likewise: and in this case there is indeed a fair field for the varied exercise of their peculiar talent. A woman is doubly powerful in this department, because she is great in that in which her sex are generally deficient. There are people born with a capacity for being tormented, and if they abide in the vicinity of one of the race of Tormentors, hardly anything can make life tolerable to them.

The Tormentor appears as one physically weak.—Almost every one can remember how at one time or other all enjoyment was marred, a day's pleasure spoiled, and a whole party made uncomfortable, by some tormentor who "stood on his or her infirmity:" how every one was suffocated because some one feared a draught, or caught cold because an individual threatened to faint; how lovers were separated, and little plans demolished; how those were compelled to walk or drive who wished to do neither; or to hurry or wait, to eat or refrain, to shiver or be roasted, at the caprice of some one of Uriah Heep-like propensities: one who "did not wish to incommode any one—oh, no: they only knew that the doctor had said they would die, or faint, or never recover it;" or, "mamma would, they felt sure, decidedly disapprove." Have we none of us ever known an invalid who reigned undisputed tyrant of the household. This line is naturally a *spécialité* with women. When we say, "*Elle se pose en victime*," there is nothing more to be urged: we may give up the point with a good or a bad grace; but give it up we must, under penalty of appearing a brute. Sometimes the stronger sex also play this game. We knew a malignant little cripple who was the bully of a whole school on account of the unscrupulous fashion with which he dealt blows with his crutch (which was iron-bound and a formidable weapon). If any lad were provoked to retaliation, the amiable youth would throw himself down and howl, exclaiming, "What! strike a poor cripple; and when he's down, too? Shame on you!"

The Tormentor appears in the guise of a warning friend.—If a man be about to undertake any work, tormentors will be at hand to prophesy all sorts of misfortune: they will suggest a variety of unkind and injurious criticism, and if they succeed in making one blench, they will add that he is not the right kind of stuff to work well since he cannot endure the ordeal of hearing the probable opinion of others; which they have, indeed, at the cost of their own feeling, deemed it their duty to tell him in all kindness. They will artfully or ostentatiously praise a man for that in which he knows he is deficient; but this only if he be of a humble-minded and distrustful disposition—instinct telling them that it would otherwise be the most subtle flattery. On this account, deserved praise can

rarely be addressed to women, who often prefer admiration for that which they least possess. Thus you shall see a witty woman anxious to be thought a beauty, and a fair woman glad to have the reputation of being talented or intellectual. A tormentor will welcome instances of special depravity in order to point his remarks, and will fairly hug to his heart a warning of the kind as an instructive type of what such a one will come to. Thus Palmer may be humorously brought in as a burr by which to irritate sinners on the turf; or Redpath be pleasantly alluded to in order to aggravate members of particular societies. A tormentor will poison a dinner with his cynicisms, or render a poor girl's first ball a purgatory by relating all he has ever heard adduced against such amusements. Perhaps he will describe his own shocked sensibilities at first beholding a waltz; carefully adding that all this is changed now, and thus leaving it to be inferred that as his high tone of morals has deteriorated, hers will share a like fate. "I was present at Miss So-and-so's first ball," he will remark, compassionately. "I beheld her first waltz; and now see what she is—a flirt, a coquette!" Thus will he pile up his warnings and denunciations. If he rides out, he questions the propriety of equestrian exercise for females, and inveighs much against masculine habits. If he converses with a young lady on other topics, it is to examine her principles, and discover (of course) that they are all wrong: "No: he cannot say *she* has gone wrong yet;" but he candidly assures her that "she might, at any moment, for anything her principles were worth to save her." And the poor thing, who up to that time has been a good happy girl at home, as many have been before—neither from a deep stern sense of religion, nor from a high transcendental doctrine of progressive perfection, but from the feminine and laudable desire of being loved and making those around her happy—unperplexed by casuistry, and not wretched by a morbid habit of self-anatomy, is shocked into believing herself a mindless and unprincipled impostor: for the moment only, let us hope; for youth is fortunate in that, though easily tormented, it soon forgets—being more easily impressionable than impressible.

The Tormentor will appear as a reformer, come into the world to set it straight according to his own ideas. These are the most troublesome, inasmuch as they are sometimes, though not always, conscientious in their disagreeable ways. They have a chronic inability to distinguish between one person and the other, and consider their mission unperformed unless they can make all people travel on one line. Of this sort are the people who are for ever calling for new police regulations, who would allow no shaving on Sundays, and would annihilate street organs; the milliners who insist on particular fashions being worn; the Sabbatarians who would stop trains and shut up gardens, and who lament over the post-office delivery:—in short, all those who would compel others to be happy in only their particular way on earth.

The Tormentor assumes to be a philosophic critic.—Meeting with one who has a straightforward tale which he wishes to relate; if he does not take it out of his mouth, he overwhelms him with inquiry into details;

and if he finds the narrative deficient therein, he will courteously express much regret—asserting that these very details are essential to the matter, the authenticity, the point, or the moral; or he will choke the anecdote with corroborative testimony of such a sort and amplitude as to make the little tale appear of very minor importance: either way the tale-teller will find himself absolutely snuffed out. He will declaim against anything that recommends itself by novelty or originality, and clamour for a rigorous uniformity; insisting that the thing which has been done shall be done again, and done in the same fashion, or he will predict for it all manner of misfortunes of the kind most likely to intimidate and distress the victim according to his temper and organisation. Thus, to conscientious men he will point out how in aiding some they must injure others (as, indeed, must inevitably happen in all reforms), making carefully of no account the largeness of the proportion of one as compared with the smallness of the other. To timid people he will foretel a storm of odium, misinterpretation and ingratitude; or, to the ambitious, he foreshadows sneers, so as, if possible, to tempt them to some more gigantic and perilous enterprise, in which, if they fail, the ruin shall be complete: when, we need hardly add, the tormentor will be at hand to give his philanthropy an airing, and complete his mission by a heavy battery of recapitulated warnings and loud offensive pity. To the vain and susceptible he will promise certain ridicule and contempt; and these vague generalities will become special to their affrighted vision. Variety of torment is essential to these operations, for the tormentor might otherwise degenerate into a bore; he will add, therefore, a subtle injustice exceedingly difficult to oppose. He will call unsatisfied sympathy, mortified vanity; interpret silence to be stupidity; and stigmatize a thoughtful man as idle. And for the neglected ones of this world, who comfort themselves by the belief that unacknowledged merit has always existed and always will, he hastens to deprive them of this poor and harmless consolation, by assuring them that there is no such thing: that real talent *must* rise, and that genius may be known by its power of conquering all men and obstacles—with other arguments of the like nature. So he leaves the neglected ones more sore-hearted and desolate than they were before; for he has taken away the content of their discontent. Can perverse human ingenuity go beyond this?

The Tormentor appears in the shape of a moving human guide-post, which shifts as you shift, and is ever in advance. There is no passing it, or hiding from it, or pretending not to observe it: it warns, and instructs, and points, and insists, until you succumb in sheer despair; feeling that you are carrying out indeed your own plan, but not as you would like to do, nor by the means you originally intended. That domineering guide-post is like a bad dream; but, being human, it cannot be broken and cast into a ditch, or yet burnt for firewood. He is also a retrospective guide-post or beacon, and will perpetually remark—"I told you so." "I said how it would be." "Do you not remember, in such a place, or on such a day, I foretold all this?" And he will recal to your mind his

warning with irritating accuracy, insisting upon an audible assent to each proposition. He will repeat to you—if possible, in public, or, at any rate, when and where you least desire it—the observations and criticisms of other people, provided they be unpleasant enough, and make a merit of doing it,—remarking that he does so in the character of a true friend; consequently, if you happen to be of a generous disposition, you are so perplexed and pained, and so anxious by your good temper to prove how grateful you can be to this good, kind man—who has all your life been your true friend without your being aware of it—so wishful to subdue original sin and appear amiable, or, at any rate, so desirous to fume inwardly if fume you must, that you will afford great sport to your tormentor. The more serious, unjust, and hurtful the charges are, the more he will din them into your ears; and after doing this until you are nearly driven wild, he will go forth professing that he has done so expressly, and at great personal inconvenience to himself, for the purpose of contradicting the falsehoods: indeed if he be permitted, he will surely return with a distressing account of the unbelief of the world in innocence, and of the derision with which his defence in your behalf was received. Even complimentary criticism may be made an engine of torment; for it is quite true that some people largely endowed with self-esteem and secretiveness dislike being made the subject of special articles, even though they be of commendatory tendency. The tormentor will never cease worming out what the intentions and hopes of such people are, and will then suggest alterations, disasters, and trivial but vexatious misconstructions; or he will praise exactly that feature which least deserves it, and will often be loudest in his admiration of a defective point, the weakness of which will have secretly vexed the other man to the soul, even before it was thus dragged into notice. He will contrive to throw a shadow even over great success; for as all good men are anxious about what shall come after them—not blotting out the past, nor sacrificing the future for the present—so it will be represented to such that their theory, though greedily welcomed now, and perhaps not altogether unsuitable, is one which will of necessity be a curse to posterity, and that as the authors of such a scheme they will in future ages be held up to scorn and contempt. In this mode many a promising scheme is knocked on the head, an aspiration is quenched, a hope dies out, or a chronic abscess is set up which may at any time be stimulated into an open sore; and so the game goes on.

It is a curious instance of contrast between the somatic and the psychical world, that whereas gangrene or mortification of the flesh is absolutely painless, and is generally the harbinger of the sleep that knows no waking, mortification of the mind is the very reverse: it is such torture that most of us would do anything to escape from it. The knowledge of this fact comes to the tormentor by instinct; and when he singles out any one whose mental constitution betrays to his practised eye a predestined victim, he hastens, by the application of corrosive applications of his own to set up a train of little ulcers which in the end mortify, having

first caused the usual amount of suffering. One might suppose that the victim would generally fly the tormentor, but it is not so: no moth buzzes about the flame more perseveringly than he returns to his torture. He seems to be subject to the same law which governs the relations between the bird and the rattlesnake, between the lizard and the fly. We have all seen the little exhibition, so common in our public gardens, of a small ball, bound within a light trellis, compelled to frolic on a fountain of water. It dances frantically round in its iron cage, beating its weary sides against it; then it hovers above a little, and as it alights on the cold spout of water it essays a faint struggle or two, causing a silver shower; an instant after, it is elevated rapidly and unsteadily on a slender stream, and tossed about a little, seeming very giddy and odd, and then losing its balance, down it falls, to be again thrown up, all weary as it is. This, or something very like it, is the fate of those who have a capacity for being tormented. The rack belonged to past ages, but the extent to which mental torture can be practised is a feature of the present time; and this arises from many causes: as, for instance, the greater publicity which is given to a man's failures or mistakes owing to the cheap press and the increase of readers. At any moment an enormous fire of disapprobation can be directed on a man for something in which, if he could only make it known, his motives were pure and good; but he wakes some morning and finds himself the subject of two or three leading articles and the mark for all sorts of scorn and intemperate abuse; and before he can collect his faculties to defend himself, he discovers that he is already forgotten, and that his appeal to public opinion would be deemed a bore and an impertinence. When this conviction comes home to him, he naturally feels injured and angry, or hurt and humiliated; and then the tormentor steps in, making the most of it if the man is utterly spirit-broken, or urging him to another effort of angry defiance if he have some fight left in him, or as much as shall suffice to get him a ruinous fall.

Tormentors are conductors or non-conductors according to circumstances: they conduct heat only when that heat is born of wrath: they are sensitive conductors of animosities, grudges, slanders, mistakes and mortifications; but to the opposite things they are non-conductors, stolid as the glass legs of a stool. Under like conditions they are radiators, reflecting gloom, discomfort, and storms; but they are blank as a stone wall when it is a question of genial mirth, happiness, or cheap and easily-obtained pleasures. They ever stir the posset of human affairs the wrong way, and thus produce curds for those to swallow who prefer their cream smooth.

The Tormentor appears as a suggester of discord.—To make people disagree is not a very difficult task on certain occasions, such as meetings of the members of any particular craft, art, or science—those of the musical, the medical, and the ministerial professions being perhaps the most acid sensitive; at appointments at the chambers of the lawyers, where, says a modern philosopher, "the most miserable and humiliating moments

of a man's life are often passed;" or reading the last will and testament to a party of surviving relatives, and, in general, all family gatherings, of whatever description. The tormentor will produce at such a time some stock subject of dispute, toss it lightly up like a pancake, and not a few are sure to seize it as it comes down; the hotter it is the harder they set their teeth into it, and the burning they get does but make them so much the more savage with each other: for wrath mistaken in its object is generally the most unappeasable. By the pancake being hot you are to understand that the subject is generally one evolving heat; of this nature are all personal matters which threaten to affect the vanity or the purse in religious matters: in regard to which a zealous, one-sided, earnest mind has in its composition somewhat of the nature of a persecutor. Old sores, ancient quarrels, family feuds—all these are pancakes for the tormentor's bill of fare, provided he can collect around him a few hungry and unwary human beings. He will suggest to the husband that his wife is unreasonable, and to the wife that the husband deems her incapable of logic; by this means the poor lady feels herself impelled forthwith to assert her forensic talent and to assign reasons for all she does, lest she should be thought incompetent to the task. The husband has his eye sharpened—perhaps his tongue also; they enter on a disquisition on "pure reason," which would have driven the calm-minded Kant to distraction; and for many a long day there is no peace in that household. If a man refuses to be tormented in the ordinary way, he may still be roused by means of a particular sort: even a hare will fight in defence of her young, and a very patient, gentle disposition, that cannot be goaded into an expression of feeling by a personal attack, may be stirred up by seeing injustice or cruelty towards others; perhaps, though shrinking and ashamed, doing violence to a nature constitutionally averse to exhibition. Such a one fires up and speaks hurriedly and warmly; then the game is out of its cover: the tormentor "is surprised, grieved, or amused," he says, "to find that he is supposed to be in earnest, and to be so misinterpreted as to have a slight word—a mere jest, in fact,—thus taken in earnest." He hastens to make the *amende honorable*; for he never lacks the gift of apologizing gracefully when that apology can make one or two people uncomfortable, or put them, as schoolboys say, in the wrong pair of shoes.

The Tormentor appears as an index to the infirmities and weakness of all people.—In this employment he will exercise the greatest care and perseverance, and, whether the knowledge be acquired under the guise of friendship or otherwise, the ungenerous use to which it is put is always the same: an exposure of slight personal infirmities is a trait of temper in which the young generally come to grief, and for this species of torture they have a painful aversion. If mental trouble or incidental mortification have made a man look pale and harassed, or a girl haggard and *souffrante*, who so glad to step in with his impertinent pity or noisy sympathy as your genuine tormentor? A man may snore frightfully, or dance out of time, or miss his bird, or crane at his fence, or stammer in his speech:

the tormentor will say, with an air of pleasantry: "He is more musical by night than by day;" or, "Yes, he did not shoot very well to-day—a young hand, you know;" or, "Our eyesight begins to fail:" (this accordingly as it is designed to aggravate the young who wish to be old, or the old who desire to be young). "Yes, don't hurry to speak, my dear fellow. I think you told me once it always caused you to stammer more." Or a girl shall have a shabby or unsuitable costume, or squint a little when she is nervous, or ill, or cross; or she dreads the cold wind, or the sun, or the fire, for reasons which appertain to the complexion. Then it will be:—"Ah! do come and sit down among us all; we shall be very glad to have a long talk: you are wiser than many here. You are *décolletée*, or not (as the case may be). No, my dear friend, don't sit there: let me have that place. I know that the fire scorches your face such a terrible colour." Perhaps the poor girl's lover is there, and her heart is wrung with mortification shamefully great for so small a defect. He will anticipate a joke, or a tale, or a *bonmot*; or if he does not do that, he will laugh so loudly and immoderately as to take people's attention off the joke, and make them think there is something funnier in it than meets the ear; and when they pray to be enlightened, they come back disgusted by the smallness of the joke and almost resentful towards the unlucky fellow who tried to amuse them. He will occasionally smile with so much significance as to disconcert even well-bred people, and lead them to distrust and misunderstand each other. At other times, especially in a party of pleasure, he will affect supreme indifference to all that delights other persons; unceasingly ridiculing any display of taste for scenery, antiquities, &c., professing that the one is affectation and the other childishness. And if the majority of those present be not strong-minded enough to bear him down and bid him hold his peace, he will succeed in quenching a good deal of innocent enthusiasm, and throwing a damp over the party: but generally gratifying himself.

If the Tormentor have a wife: but no! our heart fails us at the idea of laying bare the probable amount and variety of the sufferings which she will endure. He will sharpen his fangs upon her daily, hourly, momentarily. Let that suffice.

Lastly, he will appear as a condoler: and this is the most dreadful of all, for his condolence is always the wrong way of the grain. With ostentatious pity he invites you to the consolation of auricular confession; and under the guise of sympathy, he will make your *amour propre* bleed at every pore. In his hands you become the interesting point of a *comédie larmoyante*. He frets about you till his tears excoriate your skin; he weeps over you until you are ready to weep for yourself that you should be thus marked out for public compassion. And the most odious part of the torment is, that you cannot repel it, as your spirit longs to do, without laying yourself open to a charge of churlishness and ingratitude.

The passion for that which is usually called sport—i. e. the love of hunting, pursuing, and oppressing—is so deeply inherent in man's nature

that any one who absolutely refuses to run and be made game of, does, strange to say, draw on him a certain, though almost invisible enmity, even from his friends; according to that psychological law which declares that "there is in the misfortunes of our best friends something not wholly displeasing to us." We stir up a bear with a long pole, and he won't growl; we send the dogs into the wood, and the fox refuses to break cover; we uncouple the greyhounds, and the hare sits in her form, and will neither be put up nor kicked out. Judicious bear! wise fox! sensible hare! If you, reader, know a tormentor—and we are quite sure you do—let no fear of discomfort prevent your defending yourself by those instruments and shelters with which nature has endowed you. Remember he is a crab in its shell, and you are like—a jelly-fish, we were going to say, but a jelly-fish is not very sensitive to pain:—no, you are like a crab without its shell.

There are three ways of baffling this odious race. The first is by that genuine humility which, never supposing itself capable of any excellence, is never hurt to find itself despised. But this is rather a lamentable mode, and only advisable where the mental constitution does not admit of anything else; for it leaves, after all, a considerable margin for torment: the most humble-minded person in existence is also generally the kindest hearted, and to such a one the unconsidered or studiously misinterpreted self-sacrifice, the unaided struggle, the unesteemed forbearance, are hard trials to carry off cheerfully; and he is, further, represented to others, and almost self-condemned as having been officious where he hoped to be useful, silent when he should have been sympathising, stupid when eloquence was required. No humility can save that man from being very wretched in his mind under these circumstances; and, as he is generally unskilful in concealment, he betrays it all, to the great pleasure of the tormentor. He perhaps makes some plaint or defence: it is the best thing he can do; for, as the Greek proverb has it, "Who does not speak, him they bury alive." But he commonly defends himself in small type, and is replied to in large. *Cui bono?* The second mode, and a far better one, is the careful cultivation of a habit of good, useful self-reliance. It will in time become an attitude of the mind, and will reflect itself in your demeanour; and when you have once exchanged vanity for self-esteem, and have learned to prefer the approbation of your conscience to that of your audience, the tormentor will have little power over you. Hold your own, and slight your slights; for your humility, as has been shown, cannot save you. You may call on your friend, but he may not be there; or, if there, he may be unable to deliver you. But easy self-assurance is always at hand. Lastly, there is war to the knife. You may do everything by the timely display of a frank and fearless spirit, an uncompromising hostility, and the free exercise of a ready and caustic tongue. But, if you possess these things, we need advise you no further, for you may be sure that the tormentor will not trouble you. At such a one his first is generally also his parting shot.

The Struggles of Brown, Jones, and Robinson.

BY ONE OF THE FIRM.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WISDOM OF POPPINS.

GEORGE ROBINSON again walked upon roses, and for a while felt that he had accomplished bliss. What has the world to offer equal to the joy of gratified love? What triumph is there so triumphant as that achieved by valour over beauty?

"Take the goods the gods provide you.
The lovely Thais sits beside you."

Was not that the happiest moment in Alexander's life? Was it not the climax of all his glories, and the sweetest drop which Fortune poured into his cup? George Robinson now felt himself to be a second Alexander. Beside him the lovely Thais was seated evening after evening; and he, with no measured stint, took the goods the gods provided. He would think of the night of that supper in Smithfield, when the big Brisket sat next to his love, half hidden by her spreading flounces, and would remember how, in his spleen, he had likened his rival to an ox prepared for the sacrifice with garlands. "Poor ignorant beast of the field!" he had said, apostrophizing the unconscious Brisket, "how little knowest thou how ill those flowers become thee, or for what purpose thou art thus caressed! They will take from thee thy hide, thy fatness, all that thou hast, and divide thy carcase among them. And yet thou thinkest thyself happy! Poor foolish beast of the field!" Now that ox had escaped from the toils, and a stag of the forest had been caught by his antlers, and was bound for the altar. He knew all this, and yet he walked upon roses and was happy. "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof," he said to himself. "The lovely Thais sits beside me. Shall I not take the goods the gods provide me?"

The lovely Thais sat beside him evening after evening for nearly two months, up in Mr. Brown's parlour, but as yet nothing had been decided as to the day of their marriage. Sometimes Mr. and Mrs. Poppins would be there smiling, happy, and confidential; and sometimes Mr. and Mrs. Jones, careworn, greedy, and suspicious. On those latter evenings the hours would all be spent in discussing the profits of the shop and the fair division of the spoils. On this subject Mrs. Jones would be very bitter, and even the lovely Thais would have an opinion of her own which seemed to be anything but agreeable to her father.

"Maryanne," her lover said to her one evening, when words had been rather high among them, "if you want your days to be long in the land, you must honour your father and mother."

"I don't want my days to be long, if we're never to come to an understanding," she answered. "And I've got no mother, as you know well, or you wouldn't treat me so."

"You must understand, father," said Sarah Jane, "that things shan't go on like this. Jones shall have his rights, though he don't seem half man enough to stand up for them. What's the meaning of partnership, if nobody's to know where the money goes to?"

"I've worked like a horse," said Jones. "I'm never out of that place from morning to night—not so much as to get a pint of beer. And, as far as I can see, I was better off when I was at Scrimble and Grutts. I did get my salary regular."

Mr. Brown was at this time in tears, and as he wept he lifted up his hands. "My children, my children!" said he.

"That's all very well, father," said Maryanne. "But whimpering won't keep anybody's pot a-boiling. I'm sick of this sort of thing, and, to tell the truth, I think it quite time to see some sort of a house over my head."

"Would that I could seat you in marble halls!" said George Robinson,

"Oh, bother!" said Maryanne. "That sort of a thing is very good in a play, but business should be business." It must always be acknowledged, in favour of Mr. Brown's youngest daughter, that her views were practical, and not overstrained by romance.

During these two or three months a considerable intimacy sprang up between Mr. Poppins and George Robinson. It was not that there was any similarity in their characters, for in most respects they were essentially unlike each other. But, perhaps, this very difference led to their friendship. How often may it be observed in the fields that a high-bred, quick-paced horse will choose some lowly donkey for his close companionship, although other horses of equal birth and speed be in the same pasture! Poppins was a young man of an easy nature and soft temper, who was content to let things pass by him unquestioned, so long as they passed quietly. Live and let live, were words that were often on his lips; by which he intended to signify that he would overlook the peccadillos of other people, as long as other people overlooked his own. When the lady who became afterwards Mrs. Poppins had once called him a rascal, he had not with loud voice asserted the injustice of the appellation, but had satisfied himself with explaining to her that, even were it so, he was still fit for her society. He possessed a practical philosophy of his own, by which he was able to steer his course in life. He was not, perhaps, prepared to give much to others, but neither did he expect that much should be given to him. There was no ardent generosity in his temperament; but then, also, there was no malice or grasping avarice. If in one respect he differed much from our Mr. Robinson, so also in another respect did

he differ equally from our Mr. Jones. He was at this time a counting-house clerk in a large wharfinger's establishment, and had married on a salary of eighty pounds a year.

"I tell you what it is, Robinson," said he, about this time: "I don't understand this business of yours."

"No," said Robinson; "perhaps not. A business like ours is not easily understood."

"You don't seem to me to divide any profits."

"In an affair of such magnitude the profits cannot be adjusted every day, nor yet every month."

"But a man wants his bread and cheese every day. Now, there's old Brown. He's a deal sharper than I took him for."

"Mr. Brown, for a commercial man of the old school, possesses considerable intelligence," said Robinson. Throughout all these memoirs, it may be observed that Mr. Robinson always speaks with respect of Mr. Brown.

"Very considerable indeed," said Poppins. "He seems to me to nobble everything. Perhaps that was the old school. The young school ain't so very different in that respect. Only, perhaps, there isn't so much for them to nobble."

"A regular division of our profits has been arranged for in our deed of partnership," said Robinson.

"That's uncommon nice, and very judicious," said Poppins.

"It was thought to be so by our law advisers," said Robinson.

"But yet, you see, old Brown nobbles the money. Now, if ever I goes into partnership, I shall bargain to have the till for my share. You never get near the till, do you?"

"I attend to quite another branch of the business," said Robinson.

"Then you're wrong. There's no branch of the business equal to the money branch. Old Brown has lots of ready money always by him now-a-days."

It certainly was the case that the cash received day by day over the counter was taken by Mr. Brown from the drawers and deposited by him in the safe. The payments into the bank were made three times a week, and the checks were all drawn by Mr. Brown. None of these had ever been drawn except on behalf of the business; but then the payments into the bank had by no means tallied with the cash taken; and latterly—for the last month or so—the statements of the daily cash taken had been very promiscuous. Some payments had of course been made both to Jones and Robinson for their own expenses, but the payments made by Mr. Brown to himself had probably greatly exceeded these. He had a vague idea that he was supreme in money matters, because he had introduced "capital" into the firm. George Robinson had found it absolutely impossible to join himself in any league with Jones, so that hitherto Mr. Brown had been able to carry out his own theory. The motto, *Divide et impera*, was probably unknown to Mr. Brown in those words,

but he had undoubtedly been acting on the wisdom which is conveyed in that doctrine.

Jones and his wife were preparing themselves for war, and it was plain to see that a storm of battle would soon be raging. Robinson also was fully alive to the perils of his position, and anxious as he was to remain on good terms with Mr. Brown, was aware that it would be necessary for him to come to some understanding. In his difficulty he had dropped some hints to his friend Poppins, not exactly explaining the source of his embarrassment, but saying enough to make that gentleman understand the way in which the firm was going on.

"I suppose you're in earnest about that girl," said Poppins. Poppins had an offhand, irreverent way of speaking, especially on subjects which from their nature demanded delicacy, that was frequently shocking to Robinson.

"If you mean Miss Brown," said Robinson, in a tone of voice that was intended to convey a rebuke, "I certainly am in earnest. My intention is that she shall become Mrs. Robinson."

"But when?"

"As soon as prudence will permit and the lady will consent. Miss Brown has never been used to hardship. For myself, I should little care what privations I might be called on to bear, but I could hardly endure to see her in want."

"My advice to you is this. If you mean to marry her, do it at once. If you and she together can't manage the old man, you can't be worth your salt. If you can do that, then you can throw Jones overboard."

"I am not in the least afraid of Jones."

"Perhaps not; but still you'd better mind your P's and Q's. It seems to me that you and he and the young women are at sixes and sevens, and that's the reason why old Brown is able to nobble the money."

"I certainly should be happier," said Robinson, "if I were married, and things were settled."

"As to marriage," said Poppins, "my opinion is this; if a man has to do it, he might as well do it at once. They're always pecking at you; and a fellow feels that if he's in for it, what's the good of his fighting it out?"

"I should never marry except for love," said Robinson.

"Nor I neither," said Poppins. "That is, I couldn't bring myself to put up with a hideous old hag, because she'd money. I should always be wanting to throttle her. But as long as they're young, and soft, and fresh, one can always love 'em;—at least I can."

"I never loved but one," said Robinson.

"There was a good many of them used to be pretty much the same to me. They was all very well; but as to breaking my heart about them,—why, it's a thing that I never understood."

"Do you know, Poppins, what I did twice—ay, thrice—in those dark days?"

"What; when Brisket was after her?"

"Yes; when she used to say that she loved another. Thrice did I go down to the river bank, intending to terminate this wretched existence."

"Did you, now?"

"I swear to you that I did. But Providence, who foresaw the happiness that is in store for me, withheld me from the leap."

"Polly once took up with a sergeant, and-I can't say I liked it."

"And what did you do?"

"I got uncommon drunk, and then I knocked the daylight out of him. We've been the best of friends ever since. But about marrying:—if a man is to do it, he'd better do it. It depends a good deal on the young woman of course, and whether she's comfortable in her mind. Some women ain't comfortable, and then there's the devil to pay. You don't get enough to eat, and nothing to drink; and if ever you leave your pipe out of your pocket, she smashes it. I've know'd 'em of that sort, and a man had better have the rheumatism constant."

"I don't think Maryanne is like that."

"Well, I can't say. Polly isn't. She's not over good, by no means, and would a deal sooner sit in a arm-chair and have her victuals and beer brought to her, than she'd break her back by working too hard. She'd like to be always a-junketing, and that's what she's best for, as is the case with many of 'em."

"I've seen her sportive as a young fawn at the Hall of Harmony."

"But she ain't a young fawn any longer; and as for harmony, it's my idea that the less of harmony a young woman has the better. It makes 'em give themselves airs, and think as how their ten fingers were made to put into yellow gloves, and that a young man hasn't nothing to do but to stand treat, and whirl 'em about till he ain't able to stand. A game's all very well, but bread and cheese is a deal better."

"I love to see beauty enjoying itself gracefully. My idea of a woman is incompatible with the hard work of the world. I would fain do that myself, so that she should ever be lovely."

"But she won't be lovely a bit the more. She'll grow old all the same, and probably take to drink. When she's got a red nose and a pimply face, and a sharp tongue, you'd be glad enough to see her at the wash-tub then. I remember an old song as my father used to sing, but my mother couldn't endure to hear it:

'Woman takes delight in abundance of pleasure,
But a man's life is to labour and toil.'

That's about the truth of it, and that's what comes of your Halls of Harmony."

"You would like woman to be a household drudge."

"So I would—only drudge don't sound well. Call her a ministering angel instead, and it comes to the same thing. They both of 'em means much of a muchness;—getting up your linen decent, and seeing that you

have a bit of something hot when you come home late. Well, good-night, old fellow. I shall have my hair combed if I stay much longer. Take my advice, and as you do mean to do it, do it at once. And don't let the old 'un nobble all the money. Live and let live. That's fair play all over." And so Mr. Poppins took his leave.

Had anybody suggested to George Robinson that he should go to Poppins for advice as to his course of life, George Robinson would have scorned the suggestion. He knew very well the great difference between him and his humble friend, both as regarded worldly position and intellectual attainments. But, nevertheless, there was a strain of wisdom in Poppins' remarks which, though it appertained wholly to matters of low import, he did not disdain to use. It was true that Maryanne Brown still frequented the Hall of Harmony, and went there quite as often without her betrothed as with him. It was true that Mr. Brown had adopted a habit of using the money of the firm, without rendering a fair account of the purpose to which he applied it. The Hall of Harmony might not be the best preparation for domestic duties, nor Mr. Brown's method of applying the funds the best specific for commercial success. He would look to both these things, and see that some reform were made. Indeed, he would reform them both entirely by insisting on a division of the profits, and by taking Maryanne to his own bosom. Great ideas filled his mind. If any undue opposition were made to his wishes when expressed, he would leave the firm, break up the business, and carry his now well-known genius for commercial enterprise to some other concern in which he might be treated with a juster appreciation of his merits.

"Not that I will ever leave thee, Maryanne," he said to himself, as he resolved these things in his mind.

CHAPTER XIV.

MISTRESS MORONY.

It was about ten days after the conversation recorded in the last chapter between Mr. Robinson and Mr. Poppins that an affair was brought about through the imprudence and dishonesty of Mr. Jones, which for some time prevented that settlement of matters on which Mr. Robinson had resolved. During those ten days he had been occupied in bringing his resolution to a fixed point; and then, when the day and hour had come in which he intended to act, that event occurred which, disgraceful as it is to the annals of the Firm, must now be told.

There are certain small tricks of trade, well known to the lower class of houses in that business to which Brown, Jones, and Robinson had devoted themselves, which for a time may no doubt be profitable, but which are very apt to bring disgrace and ruin upon those who practise them. To such tricks as these Mr. Jones was wedded, and by none of the arguments which he used in favour of a high moral tone of

commerce could Robinson prevail upon his partner to abandon them. Nothing could exceed the obstinacy and blindness of Mr. Jones during these discussions. When it was explained to him that the conduct he was pursuing was hardly removed—nay, was not removed—from common swindling, he would reply that it was quite as honest as Mr. Robinson's advertisements. He would quote especially those Katakairion shirts which were obtained from Hodges, and of which the sale at 39s. 6d. the half-dozen had by dint of a wide circulation of notices become considerable.

"If that isn't swindling, I don't know what is," said Jones.

"Do you know what Katakairion means?" said Robinson.

"No; I don't," said Jones. "And I don't want to know."

"Katakairion means 'fitting,'" said Robinson; "and the purchaser has only to take care that the shirt he buys does fit, and then it is Katakairion."

"But we didn't invent them."

"We invented the price and the name, and that's as much as anybody does. But that is not all. It's a well understood maxim in trade, that a man may advertise whatever he chooses. We advertise to attract notice, not to state facts. But it's a mean thing to pass off a false article over the counter. If you will ticket your goods, you should sell them according to the ticket."

At first, the other partners had not objected to this ticketing, as the practice is now common, and there is at first sight an apparent honesty about it which has its seduction. A lady seeing 21s. 7d. marked on a mantle in the window, is able to contemplate the desired piece of goods and to compare it, in silent leisure, with her finances. She can use all her power of eye, but, as a compensation to the shopkeeper, is debarred from the power of touch; and then, having satisfied herself as to the value of the thing inspected, she can go in and buy without delay or trouble to the vendor. But it has been found by practice that so true are the eyes of ladies that it is useless to expose in shop-windows articles which are not good of their kind, and cheap at the price named. To attract customers in this way, real bargains must be exhibited; and when this is done, ladies take advantage of the unwary tradesman, and unintended sacrifices are made. George Robinson soon perceived this, and suggested that the ticketing should be abandoned. Jones, however, persevered, observing that he knew how to remedy the evil inherent in the system. Hence difficulties arose, and, ultimately, disgrace, which was very injurious to the Firm, and went near to break the heart of Mr. Brown.

According to Jones's plan, the articles ticketed in the window were not, under any circumstances, to be sold. The shopmen, indeed, were forbidden to remove them from their positions under any entreaties or threats from the customers. The customer was to be at first informed, with all the blandishment at the shopman's command, that the goods furnished within the shop were exact counterparts of those exposed. Then the shopman was to argue that the arrangements of the window

could not be disturbed. And should a persistent purchaser after that insist on a supposed legal right, to buy the very thing ticketed, Mr. Jones was to be called; in which case Mr. Jones would inform the persistent purchaser that she was regarded as unreasonable, violent, and disagreeable; and that, under such circumstances, her custom was not wanted by Brown, Jones, and Robinson. The disappointed female would generally leave the shop with some loud remarks as to swindling, dishonesty, and pettifoggery, to which Mr. Jones could turn a deaf ear. But sometimes worse than this would ensue; ladies would insist on their rights; scrambles would occur in order that possession of the article might be obtained; the assistants in the shop would not always take part with Mr. Jones; and, as has been before said, serious difficulties would arise.

There can be no doubt that Jones was very wrong. He usually was wrong. His ideas of trade were mean, limited, and altogether inappropriate to business on a large scale. But, nevertheless, we cannot pass on to the narration of a circumstance as it did occur, without expressing our strong abhorrence of those ladies who are desirous of purchasing cheap goods to the manifest injury of the tradesmen from whom they buy them. The ticketing of goods at prices below their value is not to our taste, but the purchasing of such goods is less so. The lady who will take advantage of a tradesman, that she may fill her house with linen, or cover her back with finery at his cost, and in a manner which her own means would not fairly permit, is, in our estimation,—a robber. It is often necessary that tradesmen should advertise tremendous sacrifices. It is sometimes necessary that they should actually make such sacrifices. Brown, Jones, and Robinson have during their career been driven to such a necessity. They have smiled upon their female customers, using their sweetest blandishments, while those female customers have abstracted their goods at prices almost nominal. Brown, Jones, and Robinson, in forcing such sales, have been coerced by the necessary laws of trade; but while smiling with all their blandishments, they have known that the ladies on whom they have smiled have been—robbers.

Why is it that commercial honesty has so seldom charms for women? A woman who would give away the last shawl from her back will insist on smuggling her gloves through the Custom-house! Who can make a widow understand that she should not communicate with her boy in the colonies under the dishonest cover of a newspaper? Is not the passion for cheap purchases altogether a female mania? And yet every cheap purchase—every purchase made at a rate so cheap as to deny the vendor his fair profit is, in truth, a dishonesty;—a dishonesty to which the purchaser is indirectly a party. Would that women could be taught to hate bargains! How much less useless trash would there be in our houses, and how much fewer tremendous sacrifices in our shops!

Brown, Jones, and Robinson, when they had been established some six or eight months, had managed to procure from a house in the silk trade a few black silk mantles of a very superior description. The lot had been

a remnant, and had been obtained with sundry other goods at a low figure. But, nevertheless, the proper price at which the house could afford to sell them would exceed the mark of general purchasers in Bishopsgate Street. These came into Mr. Jones' hands, and he immediately resolved to use them for the purposes of the window. Some half dozen of them were very tastefully arranged upon racks, and were marked at prices which were very tempting to ladies of discernment. In the middle of one window there was a copious mantle, of silk so thick that it stood almost alone, very full in its dimensions, and admirable in its fashion. This mantle, which would not have been dearly bought for 3*l.* 10*s.* or 4*l.*, was injudiciously ticketed at 38*s.* 11½*d.* "It will bring dozens of women to the shop," said Jones, "and we have an article of the same shape and colour, which we can do at that price uncommonly well." Whether or no the mantle had brought dozens of women into the shop, cannot now be said, but it certainly brought one there whom Brown, Jones, and Robinson will long remember.

Mrs. Morony was an Irishwoman who, as she assured the magistrates in Worship Street, had lived in the very highest circles in Limerick, and had come from a princely stock in the neighbouring county of Clare. She was a full-sized lady, not without a certain amount of good looks, though at the period of her intended purchase in Bishopsgate Street, she must have been nearer fifty than forty. Her face was florid, if not red, her arms were thick and powerful, her eyes were bright, but, as seen by Brown, Jones, and Robinson, not pleasant to the view, and she always carried with her an air of undaunted resolution. When she entered the shop, she was accompanied by a thin, acrid, unmarried female friend, whose feminine charms by no means equalled her own. She might be of about the same age, but she had more of the air and manner of advanced years. Her nose was long, narrow and red; her eyes were set very near together; she was tall, and skimpy in all her proportions; and her name was Miss Biles. Of the name and station of Mrs. Morony, or of Miss Biles, nothing was of course known when they entered the shop; but with all these circumstances, B., J., and R. were afterwards made acquainted.

"I believe I'll just look at that pelisse, if you please," said Mrs. Morony, addressing herself to a young man who stood near to the window in which the mantle was displayed.

"Certainly, ma'am," said the man. "If you'll step this way, I'll show you the article."

"I see the article there," said Mrs. Morony, poking at it with her parasol. Standing where she did she was just able to touch it in this way. "That's the one I main, with the price;—how much was it, Miss Biles?"

"One, eighteen, eleven and a halfpenny," said Miss Biles, who had learned the figures by heart before she ventured to enter the shop.

"If you'll do me the favour to step this way I'll show you the same

article," said the man, who was now aware that it was his first duty to get the ladies away from that neighbourhood.

But Mrs. Morony did not move. "It's the one there that I'm asking ye for," said she, pointing again, and pointing this time with the hooked end of her parasol. "I'll throuble ye, young man, to show me the article with the ticket."

"The identical pelisse, if you please, sir," said Miss Biles, "which you there advertise as for sale at one, eighteen, eleven and a halfpenny." And then she pressed her lips together, and looked at the shopman with such vehemence that her two eyes seemed to grow into one.

The poor man knew that he was in a difficulty, and cast his eyes across the shop for assistance. Jones, who in his own branch was ever on the watch—and let praise for that diligence be duly given to him—had seen from the first what was in the wind. From the moment in which the stout lady had raised her parasol he felt that a battle was imminent; but he had thought it prudent to abstain awhile from the combat himself. He hovered near, however, as personal protection might be needed on behalf of the favourite ornament of his window.

"I'll throuble you, if you plaze, sir, to raich me that pelisse," said Mrs. Morony.

"We never disturb our window," said the man, "but we keep the same article in the shop."

"Don't you be took in by that, Mrs. Morony," said Miss Biles.

"I don't main," said Mrs. Morony. "I shall insist, sir——"

Now was the moment in which, as Jones felt, the interference of the general himself was necessary. Mrs. Morony was in the act of turning herself well round towards the window, so as to make herself sure of her prey when she should resolve on grasping it. Miss Biles had already her purse in her hand, ready to pay the legal claim. It was clear to be seen that the enemy was of no mean skill and of great valour. The intimidation of Mrs. Morony might be regarded as a feat beyond the power of man. Her florid countenance had already become more than ordinarily rubicund, and her nostrils were breathing anger.

"Ma'am," said Mr. Jones, stepping up and ineffectually attempting to interpose himself between her and the low barrier which protected the goods exposed to view, "the young man has already told you that we cannot disarrange the window. It is not our habit to do so. If you will do me the honour to walk to a chair, he shall show you any articles which you may desire to inspect."

"Don't you be done," whispered Miss Biles.

"I don't main, if I know it," said Mrs. Morony, standing her ground manfully. "I don't desire to inspect anything,—only that pelisse."

"I am sorry that we cannot gratify you," said Mr. Jones.

"But you must gratify me. It's for sale, and the money's on it."

"You shall have the same article at the same price;" and Mr. Jones, as he spoke, endeavoured to press the lady out of her position.

"But positively you cannot have that. We never break through our rules."

"Chaiting the public is the chief of your rules, I'm thinking," said Mrs. Morony; "but you'll not find it so aisy to chait me. Pay them the money down on the counter, Miss Biles, dear." And so saying, she thrust forth her parasol, and succeeded in her attempt to dislodge the prey. Knowing well where to strike her blow and obtain a hold, she dragged forth the mantle, and almost got it into her left hand. But Jones could not stand by and see his firm thus robbed. Dreadful as was his foe in spirit, size, and strength, his manliness was too great for this. So he also dashed forward, and was the first to grasp the silk.

"Are you going to rob the shop?" said he.

"Is it rob?" said Mrs. Morony. "By the powers, thin, ye're the biggest blag-guard my eyes have seen since I've been in London, and that's saying a long word. Is it rob to me? I'll tell you what it is, young man,—av you don't let your fingers off this pelisse that I've purchased, I'll have you before the magistrates for stailing it. Have you paid the money down, dear?"

Miss Biles was busy counting out the cash, but no one was at hand to take it from her. It was clear that the two confederates had prepared themselves at all points for the contest, having, no doubt, more than once inspected the article from the outside,—for Miss Biles had the exact sum ready, done to the odd halfpenny. "There," said she, appealing to the young man who was nearest to her, "one, eighteen, eleven, and a half-penny." But the young man was deaf to the charmer, even though she charmed with ready money. "May I trouble you to see that the cash is right." But the young man would not be troubled.

"You'd a deal better leave it go, ma'am," said Jones, "or I shall be obliged to send for the police."

"Is it the police? Faith, thin, and I think you'd better send! Give me my mantilla, I say. It's bought and paid for at your own price."

By this time there was a crowd in the shop, and Jones, in his anxiety to defend the establishment, had closed with Mrs. Morony, and was, as it were, wrestling with her. His effort, no doubt, had been to disengage her hand from the unfortunate mantle; but in doing so, he was led into some slight personal violence towards the lady. And now Miss Biles, having deposited her money, attacked him from behind, declaring that her friend would be murdered.

"Come, hands off. A woman's a woman always!" said one of the crowd who had gathered round them.

"What does the man mean by hauling a female about that way?" said another.

"The poor crathur's nigh murdered wid him intirely," said a country-woman from the street.

"If she's bought the thingumbob at your own price, why don't you give it her?" asked a fourth.

"I'll be hanged if she shall have it!" said Jones, panting for breath. He was by no means deficient in spirit on such an occasion as this.

"And it's my belief you will be hanged," said Miss Biles, who was still working away at his back.

The scene was one which was not creditable to the shop of English tradesmen in the nineteenth century. The young men and girls had come round from behind the counter, but they made no attempt to separate the combatants. Mr. Jones was not loved among them, and the chance of war seemed to run very much in favour of the lady. One discreet youth had gone out in quest of a policeman, but he was not successful in his search till he had walked half a mile from the door. Mr. Jones was at last nearly smothered in the encounter, for the great weight and ample drapery of Mrs. Morony was beginning to tell upon him. When she got his back against the counter, it was as though a feather bed was upon him. In the meantime the unfortunate mantle had fared badly between them, and was now not worth the purchase-money which, but ten minutes since, had been so eagerly tendered for it.

Things were in this state when Mr. Brown slowly descended into the arena, while George Robinson, standing at the distant doorway in the back, looked on with blushing cheeks. One of the girls had explained to Mr. Brown what was the state of affairs, and he immediately attempted to throw oil on the troubled waters.

"Wherefore all this noise?" he said, raising both his hands as he advanced slowly to the spot. "Mr. Jones, I implore you to desist!" But Mr. Jones was wedged down upon the counter and could not desist.

"Madam, what can I do for you?" And he addressed himself to the back of Mrs. Morony, which was still convulsed violently by her efforts to pummel Mr. Jones.

"I believe he's well nigh killed her; I believe he has," said Miss Biles.

Then, at last, the discreet youth returned with three policemen, and the fight was at an end. That the victory was with Mrs. Morony nobody could doubt. She held in her hand all but the smallest fragment of the mantle,—the price of which, however, Miss Biles had been careful to repocket,—and showed no sign of exhaustion, whereas Jones was speechless. But, nevertheless, she was in tears, and appealed loudly to the police and to the crowd as to her wrongs.

"I'm fairly murdered with him, then, so I am,—the baist, the villain, the swindler. What am I to do at all, and my things all destroyed? Look at this, thin!" and she held up the cause of war. "Did mortal man iver see the like of that? And I'm beaten black and blue wid him,—so I am." And then she sobbed violently.

"So you are, Mrs Morony," said Miss Biles. "He to call himself a man indeed, and to go to strike a woman!"

"It's thrue for you, dear," continued Mrs. Morony. "Policemen, mind, I give him in charge. You're all witnesses, I give that man in charge."

Mr. Jones, also, was very eager to secure the intervention of the police,—much more so than was Mr. Brown, who was only anxious that everybody should retire. Mr. Jones could never be made to understand that he had in any way been wrong. “A firm needn’t sell an article unless it pleases,” he argued to the magistrate. “A firm is bound to make good its promises, sir,” replied the gentleman in Worship Street. “And no respectable firm would for a moment hesitate to do so.” And then he made some remarks of a very severe nature.

Mr. Brown did all that he could to prevent the affair from becoming public. He attempted to bribe Mrs. Morony by presenting her with the torn mantle; but she accepted the gift, and then preferred her complaint. He bribed the policemen, also; but, nevertheless, the matter got into the newspaper reports. The daily *Jupiter*, of course, took it up,—for what does it not take up in its solicitude for poor British human nature?—and tore Brown, Jones, and Robinson to pieces in a leading article. No punishment could be inflicted on the firm, for, as the magistrate said, no offence could be proved. The lady, also, had certainly been wrong to help herself. But the whole affair was damaging in the extreme to Magenta House, and gave a terrible check to that rapid trade which had already sprung up under the influence of an extended system of advertising.

CHAPTER XV.

MISS BROWN NAMES THE DAY.

GEORGE ROBINSON had been in the very act of coming to an understanding with Mr. Brown as to the proceeds of the business, when he was interrupted by that terrible affair of Mrs. Morony. For some days after that the whole establishment was engaged in thinking, talking, and giving evidence about the matter, and it was all that the firm could do to keep the retail trade going across the counter. Some of the young men and women gave notice, and went away; and others became so indifferent that it was necessary to get rid of them. For a week it was doubtful whether it would be possible to keep the house open, and during that week Mr. Brown was so paralyzed by his feelings that he was unable to give any assistance. He sat upstairs moaning, accompanied generally by his two daughters; and he sent a medical certificate to Worship Street, testifying his inability to appear before the magistrate. From what transpired afterwards we may say that the magistrate would have treated him more leniently than did the young women. They were aware that whatever money yet remained was in his keeping; and now, as at the time of their mother’s death, it seemed fitting to them that a division should be made of the spoils.

“George,” he said one evening to his junior partner, “I’d like to be laid decent in Kensal Green! I know it will come to that soon.”

Robinson hereupon reminded him that care had killed a cat ; and promised him all manner of commercial greatness if he could only rouse himself to his work. " The career of a merchant prince is still open to you," said Robinson, enthusiastically.

" Not along with Maryanne and Sarah Jane, George !"

" Sarah Jane is a married woman, and sits at another man's hearth. Why do you allow her to trouble you ?"

" She is my child, George. A man can't deny himself to his child. At least I could not. And I don't want to be a merchant prince. If I could only have a little place of my own, that was my own ; and where they wouldn't always be nagging after money when they come to see me."

Poor Mr. Brown ! He was asking from the fairies that for which we are all asking,—for which men have ever asked. He merely desired the comforts of the world, without its cares. He wanted his small farm of a few acres, as Horace wanted it, and Cincinnatus, and thousands of statesmen, soldiers, and merchants, from their days down to ours ; his small farm, on which, however, the sun must always shine, and where no weeds should flourish. Poor Mr. Brown ! Such little farms for the comforts of old age can only be attained by long and unwearied cultivation during the years of youth and manhood.

It was on one occasion such as this, not very long after the affair of Mrs. Morony, that Robinson pressed very eagerly upon Mr. Brown the special necessity which demanded from the firm at the present moment more than ordinary efforts in the way of advertisement.

" Jones has given us a great blow," said Robinson.

" I fear he has," said Mr. Brown.

" And now, if we do not put our best foot forward it will be all up with us. If we flag now, people will see that we are down. But if we go on with audacity, all those reports will die away, and we shall again trick our beams, and flame once more in the morning sky."

It may be presumed that Mr. Brown did not exactly follow the quotation, but the eloquence of Robinson had its desired effect. Mr. Brown did at last produce a sum of five hundred pounds, with which printers, stationers, and advertising agents were paid or partially paid, and Robinson again went to work.

" It's the last," said Mr. Brown, with a low moan, " and would have been Maryanne's !"

Robinson, when he heard this, was much struck by the old man's enduring courage. How had he been able to preserve this sum from the young woman's hands, pressed as he had been by her and by Brisket ? Of this Robinson said nothing, but he did venture to allude to the fact that the money must, in fact, belong to the firm.

This is here mentioned chiefly as showing the reason why Robinson did not for awhile renew the business on which he was engaged when Mrs. Morony's presence in the shop was announced. He felt that no private matter should be allowed for a time to interfere with his renewed

exertions; and he also felt that as Mr. Brown had responded to his entreaties in that matter of the five hundred pounds, it would not become him to attack the old man again immediately. For three months he applied himself solely to business; and then, when affairs had partially been restored under his guidance, he again resolved, under the further instigation of Poppins, to put things at once on a proper footing.

"So you ain't spliced yet," said Poppins.

"No, not yet."

"Nor won't be—not to Maryanne Brown. There was my wife at Brisket's, in Aldersgate Street, yesterday, and we all know what that means."

"What does it mean?" demanded Robinson, scowling fearfully.

"Would you hint to me that she is false?"

"False! No! she's not false that I know of. She's ready enough to have you, if you can put yourself right with the old man. But if you can't—why, of course, she's not to wait till her hair's gray. She and Polly are as thick as thieves, and so Polly has been to Aldersgate Street. Polly says that the Jones's are getting their money regularly out of the till."

"Wait till her hair be gray!" said Robinson, when he was left to himself. "Do I wish her to wait? Would I not stand with her at the altar to-morrow, though my last half-crown should go to the greedy priest who joined us? And she has sent her friend to Aldersgate Street—to my rival! There must, at any rate, be an end of this!"

Late on that evening, when his work was over, he took a glass of hot brandy-and-water at the "Four Swans," and then he waited upon Mr. Brown. He luckily found the senior partner alone. "Mr. Brown," said he, "I've come to have a little private conversation."

"Private, George! Well, I'm all alone. Maryanne is with Mrs. Poppins, I think."

"With Mrs. Poppins! Yes; and where might she not be with Mrs. Poppins? Robinson felt that he had it within him at that moment to start off for Aldersgate Street. "But first to business," said he, as he remembered the special object for which he had come.

"For the present it is well that she should be away," he said. "Mr. Brown, the time has now come at which it is absolutely necessary that I should know where I am."

"Where you are, George?"

"Yes; on what ground I stand. Who I am before the world, and what interest I represent. Is it the fact that I am the junior partner in the house of Brown, Jones, and Robinson?"

"Why, George, of course you are."

"And is it the fact that by the deed of partnership drawn up between us, I am entitled to receive one quarter of the proceeds of the business?"

"No, George, no; not proceeds."

"What then?"

"Profits, George; one quarter of the profits."

"And what is my share for the year now over?"

"You have lived, George; you must always remember that. It is a great thing in itself even to live out of a trade in these days. You have lived, you must acknowledge that."

"Mr. Brown, I am not a greedy man, nor a suspicious man, nor an idle man, nor a man of pleasure. But I am a man in love."

"And she shall be yours, George."

"Ay, sir, that is easily said. She shall be mine, and in order that she may be mine, I must request to know what is accurately the state of our account?"

"George," said Mr. Brown in a piteous accent. "You and I have always been friends."

"But there are those who will do much for their enemies out of fear, though they will do nothing for their friends out of love. Jones has a regular income out of the business."

"Only forty shillings or so on every Saturday night; nothing more, on my honour. And then they've babbies, you know, and they must live."

"By the terms of our partnership I am entitled to as much as he."

"But then, George, suppose that nobody is entitled to nothing! Suppose there is no profits. We all must live, you know, but then it's only hand to mouth; is it?"

How terrible was this statement as to the affairs of the firm, coming, as it did, from the senior partner, who not more than twelve months since entered the business with a sum of four thousand pounds in hard cash! Robinson, whose natural spirit in such matters was sanguine and buoyant, felt that even he was depressed. Had four thousand pounds gone, and was there no profit? He knew well that the stock on hand would not even pay the debts that were due. The shop had always been full, and the men and women at the counter had always been busy. The books had nominally been kept by himself; but who can keep the books of a concern, if he be left in ignorance as to the outgoings and incomings?

"That comes of attempting to do business on a basis of capital!" he said in a voice of anger.

"It comes of advertising, George. It comes of little silver books, and big wooden stockings, and men in armour, and cats-carriage shirts; that's what it's come from, George."

"Never," said Robinson, rising from his chair with energetic action. "Never. You may as well tell me that the needle does not point to the pole, that the planets have not their appointed courses, that the swelling river does not run to the sea. There are facts as to which the world has ceased to dispute, and this is one of them. Advertise, advertise, advertise! It may be that we have fallen short in our duty; but the performance of a duty can never do an injury." In reply to this, old Brown merely shook his head. "Do you know what Barlywig has spent on his Potion; Barlywig's Medean Potion? Forty thousand a-year for the last ten years,

and now Barlywig is worth,—I don't know what Barlywig is worth; but I know he is in Parliament."

"We haven't stuff to go on like that, George." In answer to this, Robinson knew not what to urge, but he did know that his system was right.

At this moment the door was opened, and Maryanne Brown entered the room. "Father," she said, as soon as her foot was over the threshold of the door; but then seeing that Mr. Brown was not alone, she stopped herself. There was an angry spot on her cheeks, and it was manifest from the tone of her voice that she was about to address her father in anger. "Oh, George; so you are there, are you? I suppose you came, because you knew I was out."

"I came, Maryanne," said he, putting out his hand to her, "I came—to settle our wedding day."

"My children, my children!" said Mr. Brown.

"That's all very fine," said Maryanne; "but I've heard so much about wedding days, that I'm sick of it, and don't mean to have none."

"What; you will never be a bride?"

"No; I won't,—what's the use?"

"You shall be my bride;—to-morrow if you will."

"I'll tell you what it is, George Robinson; my belief of you is, that you are that soft, a man might steal away your toes without your feet missing 'em."

"You have stolen away my heart, and my body is all the lighter."

"It's light enough; there's no doubt of that, and so is your head. Your heels too were, once, but you've given up that."

"Yes, Maryanne. When a man commences the stern realities of life, that must be abandoned. But now I am anxious to commence a reality which is not stern,—that reality which is for me to soften all the hardness of this hardworking world. Maryanne, when shall be our wedding day?"

For a while the fair beauty was coy, and would give no decisive answer; but at length under the united pressure of her father and lover, a day was named. A day was named, and Mr. Brown's consent to that day was obtained; but this arrangement was not made till he had undertaken to give up the rooms in which he at present lived, and to go into lodgings in the neighbourhood.

"George," said she, in a confidential whisper, before the evening was over, "if you don't manage about the cash now, and have it all your own way, you must be soft." Under the influence of gratified love, he promised her that he would manage it.

"Bless you, my children, bless you," said Mr. Brown, as they parted for the night. "Bless you, and may your loves be lasting, and your children obedient."

Competitive Examinations.

ONE of the characteristics of the present day is the introduction, into political and semi-political discussions, of a tone which it is not easy to catch in those of earlier times. The moral relations of measures are generally invested with far greater prominence than was formerly the case. Many of the most important movements of the day have owed their success to the fact, that they were what may be called, in cumbrous though in this instance not inappropriate slang, moral demonstrations. The Exhibition of 1851, for example, was greatly indebted to the moral apparatus with which it was surrounded. The prayers and speeches about universal and eternal peace, which, to use another slang phrase, inaugurated ten of the most warlike years in the history of modern Europe, went nearly as far towards securing its results as the mercantile advantages connected with it. Like most other things this tendency has its good and its bad side. Its good side is obvious. Its bad side is, that it exposes those who adopt it to temptations to hypocrisy, or, at best, to pedantry, strong enough to make it highly desirable that every political proposal which appeals to public support on the strength of its good moral tendency, rather than on the common ground of its political advantages, should be strictly though impartially criticised.

Competitive examinations are amongst the subjects which at present occupy the position in question. They are put forward with great zeal as providing a new profession for modest and unacknowledged merit, as a stimulus to general education, as a remedy for political jobbery, and as a means of securing efficiency in the public service. Of these recommendations the two last are, as a lawyer would say, good on the face of them. That is, if they are made out, they amply justify the adoption of the system proposed, though it must be avowed that their authors, like those of all self-denying ordinances, owe the world some explanation for their excessive virtue. The other two, though not perhaps to be described as bad upon the face of them, are nevertheless suspicious. They have about them an air so smooth and bland as to suggest at once harshness and pedantry within. Great questions, however, are not to be settled by impressions. It would be the height of folly to allow a good measure to be injured by the bad manners of those who propose it, or to miss a substantial advantage because its authors exaggerate its importance.

The present popularity, therefore, of the system of competitive examinations, is a sufficient reason for an impartial inquiry into the whole of the subject. The forms of political discussion with which we are familiar are not favourable either to completeness or to impartiality. The great

characteristic of speeches and newspaper articles is that they handle some one point of a large subject as effectively as possible within a limited space; and thus, instead of showing the different parts of a system in their relation to each other, hammer, as it were, at one nail, so that the impression which they produce at last is slight and caesided, instead of being general, systematic, and qualified.

Competitive examinations may be divided into two great classes, scholastic and official. As the origin of the official examinations is distinctly traceable to the popularity of the scholastic examinations, the latter may properly be considered first, as they throw great light on the use and on the proper sphere of the former. Scholastic competitive examinations are at present universal in all places of education in this country, and are even more popular and more rigorous in some parts of the continent; this is especially the case in France, where, at the Polytechnic, and at some of the military schools, the two classes run into each other, scholastic victories being the best, if not the only passport, to some kinds of official employment. In England competitive examinations for scholastic purposes are comparatively modern. At Oxford, the system, as applied to degrees, is not yet fifty years old. At Cambridge it is considerably older, but within the last forty years it has taken altogether a new position, and at present forms the great motive power by which the whole of the education given at the university is imparted. Cambridge affords a much more perfect illustration than Oxford of the working of the system, as it carries it to its extreme consequences. In most of the Oxford examinations, especially in the examinations for degrees, the candidates are classified, so that the competition is not between man and man, but for admission to a class. At Cambridge, on the other hand, (though the system has lately been somewhat modified,) the competition is, as a general rule, individual. The candidates are not only arranged in classes, but they are arranged in order of merit in those classes, so that each man has his share of personal victory or defeat, gained at the expense of his neighbour. He has a direct interest in his neighbour's failure, and receives distinct and definite loss from his success. The Cambridge system thus affords the best precedent for an inquiry into the probable results of the system of competition proper as applied to political purposes.

What, then, is the nature, and what are the moral and intellectual results of the system? Whatever those results may be at the universities, and especially at the university in which they are most strongly developed and most conspicuously displayed, they will be in the public offices, subject always to this observation, that they will be displayed in a much stronger shape, and will not be obviated by a variety of influences which belong to a university life. One moral effect of competition has been a familiar subject of declamation since the time, at least, of Cowper. In his elegant, though feeble, poem on public schools, he says, speaking of emulation:—

“The spur is powerful, and I grant its force.”

And after a fanciful description of its effects, he goes on :—

“ Weigh for a moment classical desert
Against a mind depraved and feelings hurt.”

In short, it was Cowper's opinion, and it is still the opinion of a considerable number of persons, that the consequence of personal competition is to produce malice and ill-will between those who engage in it. Any one who is at all familiar with the temper which prevails amongst students at the universities, will see at once that whatever other objections may be urged against the system of competitive examinations, this one, at any rate, is either altogether groundless, or is, at least, of no sort of practical importance. When it is once fully settled that the prospect of obtaining such advantages as a public body has it in its power to give, is contingent upon any test impartially applied by a recognized authority, the award is submitted to with a degree of good-humour which would surprise those who have not had the opportunity of seeing how uniformly it exists. The feelings of a man beaten in what he himself recognizes as a fair examination, are just like those of a person who comes off a loser in any other trial of strength and skill. It is a feeling altogether free from bitterness or ill-will against the successful person ; although, no doubt, the loser may, and perhaps will, feel some degree of bitterness against the system which has been unfavourable to him. This, however, is a feeling which exists in tenfold force where no test is applied except that of personal discretion. There are, no doubt, other moral considerations more or less connected with these, which affect the question of the regulation of promotion in offices as distinguished from admission to them by competitive examinations. They are considered below. In the whole, however, the experience of the universities, and especially that of the University of Cambridge, seem to afford decisive evidence that such examinations would not produce ill-will between the successful and unsuccessful candidates.

The intellectual results of competitive examinations are a wider and more difficult subject of inquiry. They can hardly be fully understood without some reference to the nature of education. The general object of all the processes which can be included under that name is twofold : the development of the powers of the mind itself, and the communication of specific knowledge to the person educated ; and, though these two objects are and must always be communicated by one and the same process, there can be no doubt that they are essentially distinct, and that the first is infinitely the more important part of the two, though the second has been for many years, and to some extent is still, unduly neglected, especially in respect to some branches of knowledge of great practical importance. Considered as an instrument for promoting the acquisition of specific knowledge there can be little doubt that competitive examinations are extremely efficient. No more effectual mode of inducing a person to learn a particular thing accurately, and to be able to reproduce his knowledge of it neatly on demand, can be imagined, than that of offering a large reward to the person who succeeds in proving that he has done so

most thoroughly. This general remark must, however, be accompanied by a very material observation.

It is of the essence of every examination that its subject must be definite and specific, and that the knowledge of that subject displayed by the person examined must also be specific, and be capable of being accurately measured. It is thus the effect of competitive examinations to concentrate the attention of the persons to be examined on a specific subject for a specific purpose. There can be no doubt that for most of the practical purposes of life this discipline is invaluable. The great obstacle with which teachers of all classes have usually to contend is a childish impatience of exertion and indifference to all the objects for which education exists. Children and boys live almost entirely in the present, and must be acted on, if at all, by the prospect of immediate rewards and punishments, and by the stimulus of immediate personal competition. This state of mind is partially succeeded by one rather less immature, in which the temptation to apathy is often succeeded by a temptation to vagueness and inefficiency. It is not an uncommon thing for lads to read and think extensively but diffusely and incoherently, never bringing their knowledge to a point, or assuring themselves that it is real knowledge and not a mere shifting set of inaccurate impressions. For such a state of mind as this competitive examinations are an excellent cure. In a few words, they are very useful means for exciting languid minds to obtain knowledge, and compelling diffuse and wandering minds to make their impressions accurate.

On the other hand, the effect of competitive examinations on the communication of specific knowledge is limited to that specific knowledge which is the subject of the examination. Their effect upon the acquisition of other knowledge is not only not good, but is distinctly bad. They are useful tonics for languid and commonplace minds, but to those which are active and original they are—even as regards the mere acquisition of knowledge—of very questionable advantage, and they are likely to become distinctly injurious unless they are very sparingly used. There is only one motive in the world which will give a man any amount of knowledge worth having for its own sake, and that is the love of knowledge, and a perception of its beauty and dignity. Any one who considers what it is that he really knows, and how he came to know it, will acknowledge the truth of this. Everyone who has any claims at all to be a man of active mind has some favourite pursuit, his knowledge of which is the really important and characteristic part of his mental furniture. In every walk of life, from the highest to the lowest, the successful and remarkable people are those who like their employment, and who would enjoy no other occupation so much, even if they were not compelled to adopt it. It is the fault of all systems of education, and the especial fault of those which are worked by means of competitive examinations, that they entirely lose sight of this principle, and that they proceed on the assumption that the persons to be educated will learn nothing unless they are driven to do so

by stimulants and compulsion. The result is that they directly hamper and discourage a love of knowledge for its own sake pursued by an independent mind. It is absolutely essential to the growth of such a feeling that it should be free, and this is incompatible with a course of study rigidly prescribed by others and enforced from stage to stage by a system of competitive examinations. Suppose a young man goes to college with his head full of thoughts and speculations upon all sorts of subjects, and with a knowledge of Greek and Latin which would enable him to reach sufficiently well, though not with minute accuracy, the sense of the classics. He might naturally enough feel the greatest curiosity about the writings of the great Greek and Roman authors, and be anxious to acquaint himself with them by every means in his power. In doing this he will, no doubt, if he is wise, obtain from those who are older and wiser what advice he can; but if he is to get any good from such advice he must assimilate it, and act upon it from his own individual conviction that it is conducive to the end which he has in view. To convert the reading of such a youth into a preparation, however thorough and complete, for a set of examinations in a specific set of books—in the choice of which he has no discretion whatever, and with the contents of which he has no motive for obtaining any other acquaintance than such as would be useful in an examination—is equivalent to destroying his independent interest in his studies, and to reducing them to a mere struggle to obtain the money rewards which are given to proficiency.

Much is said, and justly, about the evils of cramming, but it is not usually observed that it is only one form of an evil, not incidental but essential to competitive examinations, which may be described by the change of a single letter as cramping. A good examiner can devise questions which will effectually disconcert cram in the common sense of the words. Cramming will no more enable a man to work a mathematical problem neatly and correctly, or to construe with accuracy a difficult passage from a classical author, than it will enable him to draw a spirited sketch, or to compose an air. Though, however, judicious examination will go a long way to ensure, on the part of a considerable number of the persons examined, an ascertainable amount of sound and accurate knowledge on specific subjects; it is at least equally clear that the effect of a system of education kept at work entirely or mainly by such means will be to substitute, in a large number of cases, the fulfilment of a test for the attainment of the result which the test was meant to secure. The theory upon which competitive examinations must proceed is this. The fact that a man has acquired specific knowledge on certain prescribed subjects is evidence both of the inclination and of the power to acquire knowledge in general. Competitive examinations test the fact that specific knowledge in prescribed subjects has been attained; therefore they are evidence of the inclination and the power on the part of the persons examined to acquire knowledge in general. It is also asserted that whatever encourages people to acquire

specific knowledge increases their taste and their capacity for acquiring knowledge for its own sake, and that as competitive examinations have the one effect they have the other also. If "specific" knowledge means knowledge specified and prescribed by others, which is obviously its true sense in connection with competitive examinations, these statements are fallacious; for it frequently, and perhaps generally, happens that the very qualities which predispose a man to enter with interest and success into a contest of which the terms are prescribed to him by others, will indispose him to care about knowledge for its own sake. It is quite true that a man of powerful and original mind will in a competitive examination beat a dunce, just as a very good horse will beat a bad one in a race; but it is equally true, and not less important, that the qualities specially favoured by a competitive examination, like those specially favoured by a race, are by no means the most important qualities. The best man will beat the worst, but he is almost sure to be beaten by many intermediate persons inferior to himself, and that because they are inferior. The capital defect of competitive examinations, whether they are considered as a mode of communicating knowledge, or with reference to their effect on the intellectual powers, is that they reward and tend to multiply second-rate knowledge, second-rate men, and second-rate qualities; whilst they distinctly discourage the higher qualities of the mind and are unfavourable to the acquisition of deep or wide knowledge brought home to, and assimilated by, the mind which receives it.

The great requisites for success in a competitive examination are accuracy, neatness, docility, and plasticity. A man who beats every one else hopelessly in examinations—and every one who knows much of university life will remember at once the small class of public school heroes to whom the description applies—has almost always the same set of qualities. He is quick, industrious, regular, and accurate. He goes quietly through the routine prescribed to him without turning to the right hand or the left, or allowing his attention to be diverted to any collateral subject whatever. Any definite piece of knowledge can be put into his mind as neatly as if it was a bandbox, and he can always reproduce it in as perfect a state as a lady's bonnet when it comes out of the bandbox. Any accomplishment which requires delicacy and dexterity of mind he will acquire with marvellous precision. Just as the Japanese will send back a fac-simile of a lock or a pistol sent to them for repair, accurate enough to deceive the owner himself, a good specimen of this sort of man will write Greek, Latin, or English on demand in almost any required style, and with a finish and ease which for a long time conceals the fact, that what he writes has absolutely nothing in it, and is such stuff as themes are made of. He will even learn to think in a sort of way, and will appropriate current platitudes to his own use till he really believes that he found them out for himself. Any definite test, measurable by marks, will be satisfied by a man of this kind infinitely better than by a man who really thinks about what is told him, and even about some things which are not told

him; for he will take infinitely greater interest in the result of his examinations, and will give much more undivided attention to preparation for them, whilst he will have far less to contend against in his own mind. In short, a useful hack is easier to drive than a thorough-bred horse, and most people will travel with them both faster and farther.

It is, however, a great mistake and a great misfortune to arrange systems of education on this principle. The moral, metaphysical, and literary speculations of an undergraduate are often, no doubt, crude and presumptuous enough. Reading, thinking, and talking about books on such subjects will always interfere woefully with his success in competitive examinations; but crude, and to a mature mind, ridiculous as such things may seem, they are as directly connected with future power and depth of character as the restlessness and mischief of the child with the spirit and vivacity of the boy. To do one thing at a time, and to do it thoroughly, is no doubt the indispensable condition of success; but the question, *In what am I to succeed?* is far more important than the question, *How am I to succeed in my present objects?* especially if those present objects are nothing more than a high place in a class-test, with a prospect of a fellowship.

Early youth is not the time for results. It is a sort of profanation to look upon a liberal education, solely or principally, as a means of giving a man a better chance and a better start than his neighbours in a general scramble for wealth and honour. Its true object is to render him independent of such things, by opening his mind to the truth that they are but accidents, and that the qualities which deserve and command them are the substance: that it is better to be wise, just, and truthful, than to be a judge; to be calm, brave, and ready, than to be a field-marshal; that honours and success are valuable only in so far as they are evidence of the qualities by which they ought to be won, and that if obtained by other means they are contemptible mockeries.

The result is, that the experience of competitive examinations afforded by the universities, and especially by that university which carries them to the highest point, proves that success in them is not only not a complete test of that, of which they were intended to prove the existence,—namely, general superiority—but is, to some extent, a test of the reverse. The best man on the whole will not be first in an examination on specific subjects. Given equal abilities, docility will carry the day; and independence and originality, and above all, interest in other matters besides the subject of examination, will be dead weights, positively injurious to their possessors. When a man, radically inferior to the other examinees, is first in an examination, he generally wins not by superior special ability, but by reason of his not having been led away from his point by originality or independence. Some years since, a man obtained high university distinction in the following way: he was a timid, nervous lad, who had had no advantages of birth or education, and came to college with a taste for mathematics, with absolutely no taste for anything else, (many years

afterwards, his ignorance of the commonest historical events was a standing joke,) and with retired, harmless habits. He made no acquaintances; he never did anything except take a short walk, and read mathematical books. The consequence was that, in the course of upwards of three years, he had read and understood a great many, and he had his reward in a very high degree and a fellowship. This was, no doubt, an extreme, but it was also a typical case, and it was one which, with variations, is exceedingly common.

It is not in competitive examinations only that this principle applies. It applies wherever indefinite qualities are brought to a definite test. Horse-racing is an excellent illustration. It is often said, that it improves the breed of horses; and this may be true, because it directs attention to the subject and causes it to be studied, and because the breeding of race-horses forms a very small part of the occupation of breeding horses in general. It would, however, be a very great absurdity to suppose that the relative general goodness of a number of young horses depended on their places in a race run when they were three-year-olds. What the result of the Derby tends to ascertain is, which of a certain number of horses, of the same age, is able to run fastest for a certain distance. Even this result is not completely obtained, for a great deduction has to be made for the various circumstances attendant on the particular race,—such as the health of the horses, the state of the ground and the weather, the payment of the riders, and various other circumstances of the same kind. Every test, of course, fails to this extent; but after allowing for this, it still remains to be observed, that the substantial result of the test is altogether wide of the object which it might be supposed to attain. It decides not the relative goodness of the horses, but one question bearing upon their goodness; and as the goodness either of a horse or of a man is a very complicated matter, the determination of one question more or less connected with it is of very little importance as evidence of its existence.

The particular point, however, upon which the parallel between horse-racing and competitive examinations is most instructive lies in their respective results. Each system has a direct tendency to convert the examination from being a test to being a substantive object. To win prizes becomes a profession in itself, and the horse is bred and trained for that purpose to the exclusion of all other purposes. A more utterly useless creature than a racehorse, except for the single purpose of running races, cannot be imagined. He is able in a given time and place, and under given circumstances, to pass over a certain distance in a miraculously short time; and speed, no doubt, is evidence of strength and the other good qualities of a horse; but if the owner of the horse, which, by any means and by any sacrifice of all other qualities, attains a maximum of speed, is enormously rewarded and put on a sort of pinnacle of glory, the inevitable consequence will be, that great numbers of horses will be devoted exclusively to the purpose of satisfying the test imposed, without reference to any other consideration whatever.

With respect to horses, such a consequence is not of much importance. We can afford to sacrifice a certain number, even a certain breed of animals, to the public amusement—and a racehorse is certainly a finer animal than a learned pig. But even with regard to races, it may be doubted whether a less artificial and professional system would not give quite as much amusement, exercise a much better influence over the breed of horses, and avoid a good deal of gambling and blackguardism. With regard to men, it is quite another matter. The goodness of a system of education depends entirely on the goodness of the effects which it produces on those who are subjected to it. Now the really valuable qualities either of the heart or the head, are indefinite; nor can they, from the nature of the case, be measured by definite tests. Certain other qualities, more or less connected with these, can be so measured by the application of such tests; and to give great rewards for the fulfilment of such tests, must give an artificial value to those qualities which can be definitely measured, and discourage and diminish the estimation of those which cannot. Even with respect to those qualities which are encouraged, such a system has a direct tendency to narrow them, because it encourages them only in so far as it rewards the production of one specific proof of them. It rewards, not accuracy in general, but the possession of accurate knowledge of one particular thing. This might be, and sometimes is, attained, not by the cultivation of the habit of accuracy in many things, but by fixing the mind upon the subject of examination, to the exclusion of every other department of human knowledge. In short, competitive examinations are subject, in the highest degree, to the danger which besets every test or external sign, of gradually superseding and excluding the thing to be tested or signified.

The general result of this account of the nature of competitive examinations, considered as instruments of education, is, that they afford a convenient way of overcoming the childish apathy which is the first obstacle that teachers have to deal with; that they are useful for the purpose of correcting the languor and vagueness which hang about the inferior class of students at a more mature age; but that as regards the higher class of students, they are open to the objection that they not only give the second-rate men an advantage over their superiors, but have a tendency to enervate those who succeed in them; and that they have also a tendency to discourage the higher in comparison with the lower qualities, both in those who do and those who do not succeed in them. On the other hand, they certainly can be made both fair and approximately complete tests of the relative power of the candidates to do certain specific things.

Without understanding the nature of the scholastic effects of competitive examinations, it is hardly possible to understand the bearing and value of the common arguments about their use in reference to appointments in the public service. The arguments in favour of the adoption of the system in reference to all, or almost all, appointments, are, as has

already been said, four in number, two of which are properly political, and the other two collateral. The collateral arguments are, that the system would give a great stimulus to general education, and that they would provide a new profession for obscure and unacknowledged merit. The political arguments are, that they would prevent jobbery and promote the efficiency of public servants. Considerable light is thrown on each of these four allegations by the view just given of the effects of competitive examinations on education. Their bearing on the collateral arguments is most direct, and therefore they may conveniently be considered first.

The first argument is, that the distribution of political appointments by competitive examinations would give a great stimulus to general education. There can be no doubt that, in a certain sense, and subject to certain observations, this is perfectly true. The prospect of obtaining scholarships or other prizes, gives its character to the whole course of education in our universities and public schools, and the whole framework of society, as it is at present constituted, renders parents in every class of life intensely anxious to secure for their children any sort of permanent and honourable employment. These two facts, taken together, leave no room for doubt that if the prospect of obtaining civil appointments as the reward of success in competitive examinations were held out to all the places of education in the kingdom, high and low, it would exercise a most powerful influence over them. Whether this is to be desired is another question, and it can only be solved by reference to the general character of the institutions to be influenced, and the sort of instruction which they give. The elaborate Report, and the immense mass of materials from which it was composed, which have been published by the Education Commissioners, show, amongst other things, that almost every one in the country, down to the very lowest, receives some amount of instruction, and goes during some part of his life to some school or other; and they describe, with minute and elaborate detail, the general character and the nature of the instruction given in all the schools which are resorted to by the children of mechanics, labourers, and the poorer class of small shopkeepers. The nature of the education given in public schools and universities is matter of general notoriety, and it may be assumed that private schools intended for the education of boys who are intended for the universities will be of a similar kind. Considerable light has been thrown on the character of the schools which are intermediate between these classes by the Oxford middle-class examinations. It is, therefore, possible to make broad statements about schools of all classes, with a considerable degree of confidence. Of the education provided for the more intelligent youths of the higher classes, it may be affirmed that it has long since reached, and even passed, the point at which more competition than exists at present can possibly be useful. The remarks already made suggest the question whether there is not too much already; and if this were the proper place to do so, much evidence might be given in support of this view. If, therefore, the Government were to increase

largely the influence of competitive examinations in the education of these classes, they would do an injury to education instead of conferring a benefit upon it. The state of education amongst the middle classes seems to be worse than in any other part of the community. The worst schools in the country are those which are above the national schools and below the classical public schools. Their defect lies, beyond all doubt, in the ignorance of the teachers. Teachers for the poor are trained at a vast expense, and with a care which, if it errs at all, errs on the side of excess. Teachers for the rich have usually gone through the public schools and universities—a course of instruction which, with all its defects, is perhaps the most searching, and, certainly, one of the longest, most elaborate, and most instructive in the world. Teachers of middle-class schools are, for the most part, destitute of any regular training whatever for their profession. They take it up as a mere matter of business, and often as a makeshift rendered necessary by failure in other pursuits. Thus their characteristic fault, which, of course, is reflected in the education which they give, is that they degrade a liberal profession into a mere trade. This state of feeling would be confirmed and perpetuated if a large number of prizes were offered to the pupils of such schools, to be distributed by public competition. The prospect of obtaining such prizes would be regarded as the principal use of the education given in the schools, and the fact that a certain number of pupils had obtained them would furnish their proprietors with the most seductive, and the most delusive, of all possible advertisements. Nothing would be easier than to raise the character and tone of these institutions by a measure which would be perfectly simple, which would cost nothing, and which would have many obvious collateral advantages. Let the universities examine the teachers as well as the pupils, and give them distinctive degrees, according to their merits, and they will raise the tone of the whole profession, and greatly strengthen themselves in the position which, happily, they are quickly recovering in the esteem of the public at large.

It thus appears that the education of the upper and middle classes would be injured rather than promoted by any system of competitive examinations wide enough to affect them perceptibly; but with the lower classes the case is different. There can be no doubt that the education given in schools for the poor is still far below the point at which competitive examinations could become injurious. A very small per-centage of the children stay after they are twelve years old. In the country, the great mass attend only up to ten; and even in towns, those who stay till they are twelve form the exception. Up to that age, the simplest forms of childishness and apathy, backed by indifference on the part of ignorant parents, are the great obstructions to education, and competitive examinations are excellent remedies for these faults. On the other hand, the teachers are the strong point of schools for the poor. Most of them have been regularly educated for their business, and the Government grants, especially as they will be administered under the new Minute, which has

excited so much attention, give a strong guarantee that the general character of the school will not be allowed to be sacrificed to the interests of a few favourite pupils. The effect, therefore, of competition in these schools would probably be very good, and would certainly be very strong. In all the great Government establishments, such as dockyards and arsenals, numbers of boys are employed, and such employment is keenly sought for. In some instances part of the employment is allotted by the result of competitive examinations, with the best result both to the public service and to the popular education of the place. An account of the working of this system at Plymouth may be seen in Mr. Patrick Cumin's Report to the Education Commissioners. It is to be found in vol. iii. p. 63, of their Report and Appendix.

The next point to be considered is the argument that an extensive system of competitive examinations would provide a new profession for modest and unassisted merit, and would enable obscure men of ability to raise themselves in the world. The first observation that suggests itself upon this is, that there never was any time or country in which obscure men of ability had greater advantages than they have in England at the present day. Excellent elementary education is provided at the cheapest possible rate for every one who chooses to take it. There is no child so poor, and no adult so neglected, that if either of them feels the smallest wish to be educated, they will find the least difficulty in gratifying that wish. A lad who is able to read, write, and cypher well, has an almost boundless field open to him; and the real reason why so few people rise in the world, is not that there are few openings, but that in reality there is little ambition, and that the great mass of mankind, though they may occasionally grumble, are not really sufficiently dissatisfied with their position in life to make any considerable sustained effort to improve it. No one, of course, would contend that it is an easy thing for a friendless labouring boy to become lord chancellor (though such an event has actually happened within the last ten years); but it is no very difficult matter for him to become, say, a station-master on a railway. The steps are as plain as possible. A good boy, in a national school, would easily get employment as a telegraph clerk; a well-conducted telegraph clerk might, as he got older, aspire to becoming a guard; and a well-conducted guard is not an unlikely person to become a station-master. There are many counties where an able-bodied man of good character and fair education might make sure, with a very little trouble, of becoming a policeman. An active policeman has before him the prospect of becoming a sergeant, an inspector, a superintendent, and possibly the governor of a gaol. A saving journeyman may become a master; nay, a navy may take work on contract, and may, as several of them have, earn hundreds of thousands of pounds, before he know how to write his own name. In short, in every walk of life whatever, those who know how to take care of their interests and to use their opportunities will find abundance of ways to what, in their original rank, they would have regarded as exceedingly

enviable positions. This being so, why should the public go out of their way to add one more to the many avenues to money and rank which already exist? and would the avenue which it is proposed to open be a wholesome one?

There are the strongest reasons for supposing that it would not. In the first place, what sort of class would such a system tend to produce? It would tend to produce a set of professional passers of examinations, men whose prospects in life would depend entirely on their success in reproducing, for the satisfaction of examiners, the subjects they had got up out of books. The observations already made on the effects on education of competitive examinations show that the qualities which might be expected in such men would be anything but high.

In the next place, the public service would by these means be put before the world in a totally false light. The public offices are places for work, they are not temples of fame, entrance into which is to be considered as the reward of virtue. The relation between the Government and its clerks is the ordinary relation between master and servant. No doubt the Government is quite right in taking whatever may be the most effectual means for getting good servants, but it would be altogether absurd to erect it into a sort of Lord Bountiful, rewarding humble virtue and patronizing the liberal arts. Governments should mind their own business, and not aspire to the honour of being national schoolmasters with a spice of the clergyman superadded. They will only spoil what they try to foster.

The real want at which the argument in question points, and the way to supply it, are essentially different from those at which the argument itself is levelled. In every society there always will be a certain proportion of persons who are fitted by natural refinement of mind or energy of intellect for a higher and larger training than they are likely to receive in the position in which they are born. In so far as a great system of Government competition affected such persons at all, it would be a misfortune. Any one who knows what the inside of a public office is like, knows that a clerkship is about the last place which a man of this sort ought to wish or would wish to hold, if it were not invested with artificial splendour by being described as a reward for merit. The real want of such persons is a high education, not a secure provision for life, and the means of satisfying that want would be provided not only sufficiently but in splendid profusion if the charitable endowments of the country were properly managed. The whole of this most curious and interesting subject is discussed with conspicuous ability in the fifth part of the Report of the Education Commissioners (pp. 456-540; see especially the observations on Christ's Hospital, pp. 496-503).

The third argument in support of a general system of distributing appointments by the result of competitive examinations is, that it would put an end to political jobbery. This is perfectly true, and is undoubtedly the strongest recommendation of the system. No one can

affect to deny that the appointments to the less conspicuous offices under Government, offices which almost any one can discharge respectably, were and are generally made from personal reasons, and are to that extent jobbed, if the word is restricted to appointments made with a view to private and not to public advantage, without implying that they are positively corrupt or improper. No doubt this system is accompanied by disadvantages, and tends to diminish the efficiency of the public service, though it is of less importance than is usually supposed, as less depends on the efficiency of subordinate officers than many people think. No doubt a system of appointment by competitive examinations would effectually exclude jobbery from every appointment to which it extended; and it must be further observed, that the effects of the measure would extend far beyond the limits of its direct operation. It would be universally and not unjustly regarded as a pledge on the part of the Government to act with uprightness and impartiality in the distribution of its patronage; this would, no doubt, be a great advantage, not merely in a political but also in a moral point of view, over and above the positive advantages of the removal of jobbery itself, and of the relief of official men from the temptations to which they are at present exposed by the importunities of those who have claims upon them. These, no doubt, are great advantages, and are worthy of attentive consideration.

The last, the most important, and also the most hotly disputed of the arguments in favour of the system, is, that it would raise the level of efficiency amongst public servants. The argument in the negative is, that there are many qualities of great importance in public servants which competitive examinations do not test. And the qualities generally referred to in support of this assertion are those which relate to the manners or morals of the candidate. On the other side this is admitted, but it is answered that the probability is that men who do possess the qualities tested by competitive examinations will possess a larger share of the qualities not tested by them than an equal number of persons selected by chance. A man who has given some evidence of accuracy and the power of sustained attention is more likely, or at the very least is not less likely, to be honourable, trustworthy, and gentlemanlike, than a man who has given no evidence whatever of anything. No doubt this is true, and it disposes of the question as far as regards appointments made at random, or (which practically comes to the same thing) from purely personal considerations. But this observation must be taken in connection with the remarks made above as to the qualities which enable men to succeed in competitive examinations; so that the conclusion will be, that a system of competitive examinations would secure for the public offices a supply of men distinguished by those intellectual qualities which are required by success in competitive examinations; and, to say the very least, on a par, in moral qualifications and gentlemanly manners, with persons otherwise appointed. When, however, this result is obtained, and we come to apply the principle to the actual state of the

public offices, an entirely new question arises. Are such men wanted in the public offices, and for what purposes? In order to solve this question it is necessary to say something of the general character of the business which they transact.

Most of the public offices are framed on much the same mould. Some of the duties to be done require high qualities, originality, force of character, varied knowledge both of books and men. An Under-Secretary of one of the great Departments of State may have duties not much less various or less difficult than those of a judge; though the range of his duties depends in a great measure on the inclination, the knowledge, and the industry of the Head of the Department. This, however, is altogether the exception. The duties of the great mass of public officers involve very little discretion, and absolutely no responsibility beyond that which attaches to obedience to a prescribed routine. Even when he rises to the very highest point which he can hope to reach, a Government clerk is occupied almost exclusively in collecting materials for the use, and preparing drafts for the approval, of his superiors. He is hardly ever called upon to act upon his own responsibility, or to think for himself. The great majority of the offices in the gift of the Crown have two great advantages. They relieve the holders from all anxiety as to their future prospects, and the duties are, as a rule, moderate in amount and not uninteresting in kind. Some of them are exceedingly interesting.

This broad division between those offices which do, and those which do not involve discretion, indicates plainly the limit within which competitive examinations would be useful. The sort of man who succeeds in a competitive examination is just the sort of man who makes a good clerk. The presumption is that he is regular, clear-headed, docile, plastic, and that he has the temper, and therefore the manners, which usually go with such a turn of mind. On the other hand, his success raises no presumption in favour of his originality or independence of mind, and is even to some extent evidence to the contrary. The result is, that competitive examinations might be expected to raise the efficiency of the less important class of public servants, but that if they were used for any other purpose, the result would be the general exclusion of first-rate men from the higher offices, to which, at present, they are not unfrequently appointed. This would be an evil which would almost infinitely overbalance any advantage which could be derived from the increased efficiency of the inferior officers. A priggish and timid under-secretary would do more harm in a week than any number of irreproachably regular clerks would set to rights in ten years.

In practice this is universally admitted. No one proposes to appoint any officer by competitive examination whose position is conspicuous or important enough to afford in itself a guarantee that the appointment will not be jobbed. No chancellor would venture to make a briefless dependant into a judge, and no Secretary of State would ever think of jobbing the

appointment of Under-Secretary, so long as he valued his own comfort and cared to discharge the duties of his office with reputation. The result is, that such offices as these are, in a large proportion of cases, filled by men of considerable talents and force of mind. Even for offices much less conspicuous than these, competitive examinations are rarely, if ever, proposed. For example: how would the public at large, and the clergy in particular, like to see inspectors of schools appointed by such means? What school manager would adopt them to guide him in the selection of a schoolmaster? Would any one listen to the proposal to extend the system to county court judgeships and police magistracies, even though these posts, important as they are, are occasionally jobbed?

These questions are generally slurred over, or left on one side, by the advocates of competitive examinations. They say that no one proposes to apply the system to such cases; that it is not suited for them; that grown men cannot be expected to submit to such examinations, and that in fact they would not do so. All this is perfectly true; but what does it prove? Why will not grown men submit to such tasks? and why is not the system as well suited to judges as to clerks? If the best lad in Westminster School can be selected by a competitive examination, why not the ablest man in Westminster Hall? The plain answer is, that the more important qualities, those which distinguish grown men from each other, and on which happiness and usefulness principally depend, are in their very nature incapable of being brought to a definite test. It would be as absurd to try to express in marks the difference between a good judge and a bad one, as to try to measure a mountain with a two-foot rule. If it is admitted that competitive examinations will not apply to grown men for the reason stated, it will follow that they will not apply to boys or youths, in so far as the same reason holds. It will follow that a boy of mature character, of manly habits of thought, of original and independent mind, will, by reason of his possession of those qualities, be at a disadvantage in a competitive examination, for reasons very like those which would ensure the defeat in a short foot-race of a powerful man of thirty by a slender lad of eighteen.

It may be asked whether competitive examinations might not be so contrived as to test originality and force of character. The answer is, that they could not, because the repugnancy between the two things lies in the essence of each. A competitive examination must be definite, and it must imply a course of special preparation imposed externally. No one knows what are the elements which constitute originality, power of character, and capacity of understanding. We attribute those qualities to particular men, differing widely from each other in a thousand ways, because we feel that there is a deep, though subtle, resemblance between them, which we can describe but cannot define, and which, if we try to define it, eludes our grasp altogether. Such qualities are therefore indefinite, and will always continue to be so, unless our knowledge of

human nature should be inconceivably increased. It is a contradiction in terms to propose a definite test for indefinite qualities.

Another reason for the same conclusion is, that it would be impossible to find examiners whose judgment would be worth having. Men are easily to be found who will command perfect confidence when they say, "I certify that the merit of the answers of A to the questions contained in this paper of mathematical problems, is to that of the answers of B as 95 to 36;" but who would care to know that two or three gentlemen sitting at Whitehall had conversed with A and B, and set them essays to write, and that they found that A had greater originality than B, and B greater capacity than A. The answer would be, that no doubt there was some evidence for their opinion; and so the fact that a man is seen walking along the Strand in the morning is some evidence that he committed a murder in Smithfield in the afternoon, for it shows that he was near the place, and might have been there. An ardent advocate of competitive examinations once observed that he had examined several candidates for a fellowship, and that he was satisfied that he had exactly gauged the mental powers and calibre of each of them. Those who knew both the examiner and the examinees could not doubt that, vivid as the gentleman's impressions might be, they could not possibly be complete, as there was not room enough in the one man for complete pictures of the others.

These principles show how far competitive examinations may be usefully employed in the public service, and suggest several observations on the subject, which are often forgotten, and should always be borne in mind. Being favourable to second-rate men, and second-rate men being required for the subordinate positions in the service, they will, no doubt, supply the ablest second-rate men who are to be had; but it should be carefully recollected that they are childish expedients, intended for second-rate people, and a door should be left open by which abler men may be introduced into the service at a more mature age over the heads of those who have come in by competition. There is great danger that if the entrance to the public offices comes to be regarded as a reward of distinguished ability—and the public at large cannot be expected to draw nice distinctions as to the sort of ability which is so distinguished—the persons who enter upon such terms will look upon the honours of that service as their right, and will resent their being given to others. "Why," they will ask, "after choosing us for our merits, do you prefer others to us who have proved no merits at all?" The answer ought to be, "The merits for which you were rewarded were not those of a distinguished man, but those of a good boy. You chose at an early age to discount your prospects, and to accept a quiet and secure occupation as a relief from the anxieties and trials of open professions. You must not now expect to be treated as if you had chosen a more adventurous course. Clerks you are, and clerks you will remain; when we want statesmen we shall look elsewhere." To come to maturity late is the characteristic of great and

enduring power of mind and body; and to tie the public service down to officers who distinguished themselves at twenty, would be to exclude from it those very men who can least easily be spared.

This does not apply to those branches of the public service in which special definite knowledge, capable of being accurately tested, must be acquired at an early age, and in which, from the nature of the case, every candidate must enter young. The scientific branches of the army precisely fulfil these conditions. As promotion is by seniority, the service must be entered at an early age. As special definite knowledge is indispensable, its presence may be tested, and superiority in it may be fairly rewarded by competitive examinations. To some extent, the same observations apply to India. Men must go there young if they are to live; and there are so many unpleasant circumstances connected with life in India, that the mere wish to go there is evidence of a certain degree of originality and vigour of character. A mere prize getter is hardly likely to carry his dexterity to so rough a market. At the same time there were advantages about the old system which appear to have been needlessly thrown away by the new one. Haileybury gave a common object of interest, and in some respects a common character, to the students who passed through it, which no one will undervalue who knows the power of traditions at places of education, and the freemasonry which exists between men brought up at the same school or college. The author of the present essay saw much of Haileybury during the last three years of its existence; and though the system had obvious defects, it was impossible not to admire the *esprit de corps*, and the spirited, courageous tone of the place. The names of the civilians who sustained our empire through the mutiny with a desperate heroism not exceeded by the military themselves, were household words at Haileybury, and their exploits produced throughout the whole place an effort like that which the success in after life of an Eton man produces at Eton. No one could see the enthusiasm of the gallant youths at the fall of Delhi without feeling that when the opportunity arose they would fight not only for the honour of England, but for the honour of Haileybury, and for the sake of the happy days they had passed, and the kind friends they had known there. If the college had been maintained, admission to it being made by competition, every advantage of the new system would have been gained, and those of the old system would not have been lost.

A second observation is, that though competitive examinations may regulate admission to an office, they ought not to affect promotion within it. Every one who cares to be well served must care for the interests of those who serve him, and the one great advantage which official life gives in exchange for the retirement and subjection which it imposes is its security. A clerk anxious about his future prospects is in as woful a condition as any innocent human being can occupy. What must be the state of an office in which some twenty or thirty men are shut up as in a cockpit, with periodical cock-fights, the result of which determines their

position and prospects in life? What degree of zeal and good feeling in the discharge of his duty could be expected of the father of a rising and increasing family, who saw that his prospect of increased comfort and dignity depended on his succeeding in beating in a competitive examination some young man fresh from college. His whole comfort would be destroyed by such a prospect, and he would be deprived of that degree of composure and security which is essential to the satisfactory transaction of business. Here and there, no doubt, a case might occur in which the younger members of an office might be usefully stimulated by a competition for some specific purpose; but such exceptions apart, it is universally true that competitive examinations should be restricted to admission to offices, and should have no effect upon promotions within them.

Another observation which must not be overlooked is, that there are cases large enough to form a class, in which competitive examinations would deprive the public of useful and sometimes of transcendently useful servants. The opponents of the system constantly point to Clive and Wellington as illustrations of the futility of the tests proposed. Would they, it is asked, have won a prize in competition? The answer always relied upon is:—Yes, they would; for if they had not been able to get commissions without winning them in an examination, they would have won them as they won their battles in after life. The answer does not meet the objection. The observations made above show that the qualities by which battles are won are very often the very qualities by which competitive examinations are lost. An imperious, wayward, self-willed, naughty boy, like Clive, would never have gone to India at all if he had had to pass a competitive examination before he got there. He would not have submitted to the discipline. Wellington seems to have been an illustration of the class of men already referred to—men who come to their maturity late. There is no evidence at all that he was ever what would be called a clever boy; even as a young man he was not distinguished, though those who knew him intimately saw what great qualities lay under a careless and trifling exterior. Competitive examinations will not alter human nature. They will not make the oak grow like a poplar, nor give the bulldog the docility of the spaniel. It is the easiest thing in the world to deter such men as Clive or Wellington from entering on particular walks of life; indeed, nothing is more singular than the slightness of the grounds by which the choice of a profession is determined. Whilst a man is uncertain as to the nature and extent of his talents, the least thing will turn him away from a profession in which he must have succeeded if he had persevered. It must never be forgotten that the exclusion of a single Clive or Wellington is a far greater loss than the admission of almost any number of drones.

There is another class of persons who, though not illustrious, would be very useful, and who would be excluded from the public service by any system of competitive examinations. This class is particularly numerous in the army and navy. It is commonly objected that com-

petitive examinations would be unfavourable to bodily strength and activity; and to this it is usually replied—first, that there is no opposition between bodily and mental power, but the reverse; and secondly, that where bodily powers are required, the attainment of a certain standard of strength may be made a condition precedent to the competition. The first of these arguments is extremely popular for a variety of reasons. The consistency between mental and bodily excellencies, and even their intimate relation, is asserted with passion by those who are in the habit of insisting on the connection between religion and common life, the essential manliness of Christianity, and other well-known topics of the same kind. For obvious reasons, such views are particularly welcome to schoolmasters and others engaged in education, and the wide popularity and influence of such a book as *Tom Brown's School-days* is a good illustration of their nature and origin.

An impartial examination of the matter will, probably, suggest a considerable modification of them. It is hardly possible to doubt that fitness and inclination for study, especially amongst lads who have not come to their full maturity, is almost entirely a question of temperament. Take two boys of equal mental capacity, and equal dexterity, one of whom has a good deal of nervous energy, little muscular strength, a slow circulation of the blood, and little animal spirits; whilst the other is of sanguine temperament, great muscular strength, full of life to the tips of his fingers; and can any one doubt that in any scholastic competition the first will beat the second, though the second would, in all probability, make an infinitely better soldier or sailor than the first? If objection is taken to setting the mind in opposition to the body, it must surely often be admitted to be true that, as a general rule, excellence of some bodily functions is not usually found in connection with the excellence of some others. A very large and powerful man is seldom very active. A very quick man is seldom very powerful. In the same way, as a general rule, the strength, activity, and hardihood which fit a man for active out-door pursuits, are not usually found in connection with those peculiarities of the brain and nervous system which incline their possessor to mental exertion.

No doubt exceptions to this rule do occur. There is a small class of men, of peculiarly vigorous make, who are equally fit for bodily and mental labour; and there are professions—the bar is one of them—in which such a constitution is the greatest possible assistance towards success, if it is not a condition of it. It is to their possession of this great gift that many of the fifteen judges owe their elevation. It is, however, a very rare gift indeed. As a general rule, a hardy sportsman will soon be knocked up by late hours, bad air, short nights, and constant exertion of the eyes and the brain; and on the other hand, the man with a student's constitution will be quite unequal to deer-stalking, mountaineering, or campaigning. No one doubts that the qualities which make a horse a very good cart-horse, unfit him for running races; or that those which fit him for the Derby, disqualify him for drawing an omnibus.

The proposal to give ordinary commissions by competition is just like a proposal to test cart-horses, not by drawing but by running. It may be said, why not examine into the qualities which you wish to reward? The answer has been given already. It is impossible, because the qualities (daring, prudence, spirit, and the like,) are indefinite; the test must be definite, and the power of satisfying such a definite test as would be proposed, is generally found in connection with other qualities than those which are required. The proposal to make a certain standard of strength condition of competing, does not meet the objection that the examination would be unfavourable to a whole class who ought not to be excluded. The object is to include those who would be excluded, not to exclude some of those who would otherwise be included.

The general result of the whole is that, considered as instruments of education, competitive examinations are useful, but that they are useful in proportion to the immaturity, the languor, and the absence of the higher qualities of mind in the persons examined; and that there is a point, which is soon reached, at which they become positively injurious to students of a higher kind. Considered as tests for the distribution of political offices, they are useful as pledges of the sincerity of Government, and of their wish to distribute their patronage on pure principles: they are also useful as a rough but effectual cure for jobbery; they would raise the standard of efficiency amongst Government officers of an inferior kind, and for others of a superior kind, under certain special circumstances. On the other hand, they would be unfavourable to men of the highest order, and also to useful men of a lower order, who are required for rough purposes. In a word, they would favour a rather low level of mediocrity, to the exclusion of all other persons.

These observations have no reference to pass examinations. They may frequently be useful either as tests upon entrance to an office, or as barriers to be passed before particular rank within an office can be attained.

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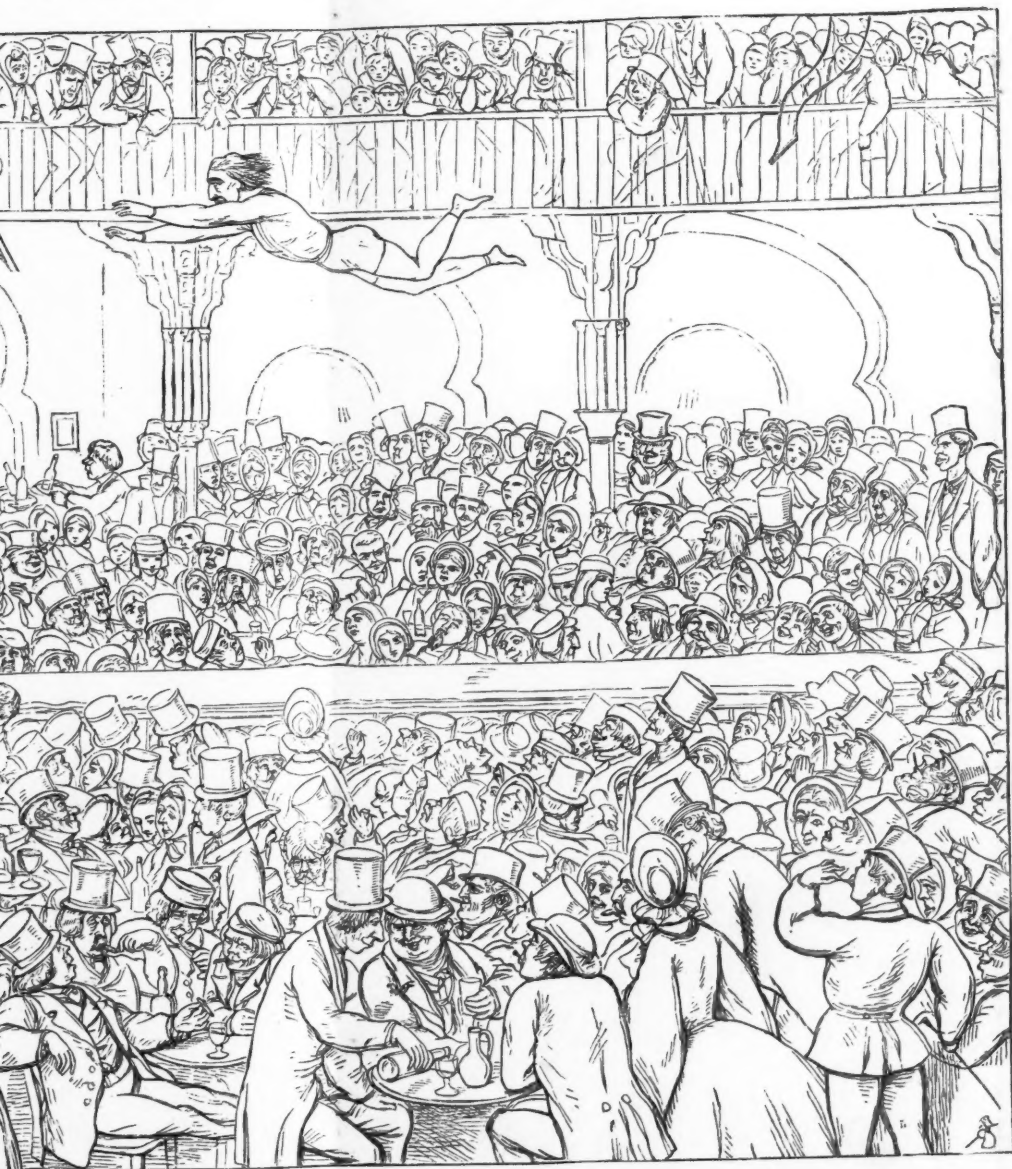
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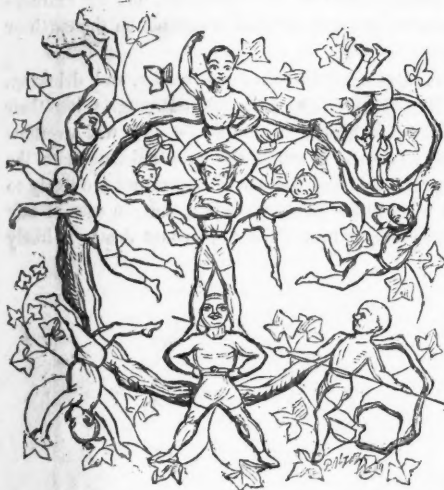


A Popular Entertainment





A Popular Entertainment.



CONCERT HALLS

and such like places of public entertainment have lately become so like taverns, or taverns have become so like concert halls and such like places of public entertainment that it is not easy to say where one begins and the other leaves off. A great want must surely have been met when promoters and managers of the People's amusements first conceived the happy thought of

combining singing and tumbling, and eating and drinking, and smoking—of blending, as it were, brandy-and-water with sentimental songs, and Bounding Brothers, and low prices. It must be very much better than a play,—if we may form an opinion from the numbers who crowd to these places,—to be able to sit, with a little table before one, with, for instance, a bottle of beer upon it, to have one eye turned upon an acrobat, the other gazing affectionately at the drink, a cigar hanging lazily from the mouth, from which curls of smoke come forth leisurely and languidly, for one's ears to imbibe the while the brilliant but violent vocalization of modern Italy, or the refined comic song of our own land, happy with either, and considering each song, dance, or other performance with an impartial look of contentment, the sense of smoke, and of drink, and of general enjoyment, producing a hazy, sleepy, stolid, stupid look of perfect happiness.

There are many gentlemen present who have very much the air of being at home, and as if they did that kind of thing every night,—and perhaps they do; many others who have the appearance of having come from the country, and who seem under the impression that they are seeing life,—and no doubt they are seeing it as far as the smoke permits; and there are others who, from various outward symptoms, look as if they had what is called a foreign origin,—and very likely they have.

They are all, no doubt, very fond of music; and if they are not, it is very pleasant to think that the entertainments are so various, that there is a chance of everybody's taste being satisfied—that if people are not pleased with one thing they may be with another; and that if the ear is not charmed with music, astonishment may be excited, and ladies and gentlemen may be roused to enthusiasm by seeing the wondrous feats that may be accomplished on the tight-rope, and the extraordinary contortions of which the human acrobat is capable on the earth or in the air.

When Song, and Comic Dance, and smoke, and eating, and drinking, or Dramatic Scenes, or Nigger Serenaders, or Infant Prodigies, lose their charm, the public may still be drawn in thousands, and will overflow nightly to witness any performance in which the personal danger to the performer is sufficiently great, that the feelings of spectators are likely to be "arrowed up," and a reasonable prospect exists, that, in case of any slip or accident, that serious danger to limb, if not instant death, is likely to be the result.

On a further Reconstitution of the Navy.

DURING the great war with France, in which our most brilliant naval victories were won, his Majesty George the Third visited Portsmouth dockyard, and was surprised to find the master-builder of that establishment enlarging one of the docks on his own responsibility. "And why," asked the king, "have you presumed to do this without authority?" "Please your Majesty," he replied, "I learnt that the French were building a ship too large to come into the dock as it was:" and the king was thoroughly satisfied with the explanation. It is a mere matter of fact to add, that the French ship was captured very soon afterwards, and brought into the dock so thoughtfully provided for her.

It is impossible to recal this incident without contrasting the state of things in George the Third's day with that which now exists, and has existed for several years past. That consciousness of superiority on the sea which then kept us tranquil in the midst of war, has, of late years, given place to apprehensions which have kept us agitated in the midst of peace. During the last session of Parliament, for example, the representative of our Admiralty in the House of Commons was continually reminding us of the great naval power of France; our Prime Minister pleaded more than once for *defensive* works; and the close of the session was signalized by an acclamatory vote designed to secure further *protection* for us. We need hardly add, that this decline of confidence in ourselves has caused the confidence of others in us to decline, until our *prestige* on the Continent has sunk very low. When naval matters are now talked of there, it is no longer of England, but of "the Emperor" that men think first; and the great name of Palmerston, once so profoundly respected throughout Europe, is now more prominently associated with mid-water forts at Spithead than with mighty fleets floating there.

The sole cause of these humiliating changes is our culpable delay, twice repeated, in adopting great mechanical improvements. First, we allowed the French to outstrip us in the application of steam propulsion to line-of-battle ships; and even before we recovered our due eminence in this respect, we permitted the same Government to gain a second great advantage over us, by plating ships with iron. Thus did we twice risk our reputation as the first naval power in the world, and, on both occasions, by neglecting agencies and resources peculiarly our own. It is quite true that we have recovered our superiority of strength as regards our steam navy, and the splendid performances of the *Warrior* promise so well for the iron-cased fleets which we are now building, that we may hope to be first in the new competition ere long. But, in both instances,

we have had to make extraordinary financial and other sacrifices; and in both instances we have also compromised, for a series of years, the glorious reputation which our forefathers won, and which is so essential to the permanent integrity of our wide-spread empire.

Our fault has not lain, be it observed, in failing to *invent* new mechanical agencies, but in refusing to apply them promptly when invented, and when other powers had resolved to use them. It would, perhaps, be an unwise policy for us, who always have so much wealth invested in existing ships, to cast about for changes which should render those ships valueless, or even less valuable. But when a change has become inevitable, it is our clear duty to sink no more money in the old system, but to apply all our resources to the development of the new one. Thus, although it may have been no part of our business to invent steam war-ships, it was manifestly our duty, after such ships once came into profitable use, to secure as many of them as possible for the sums which we expended. And precisely the same thing may be said in regard of iron-cased ships.

We impress these considerations carefully upon the reader, because it is one of our main objects in this article to show that we are at the present moment still pursuing a system which has already cost us so much in money and reputation. Having allowed France to show us how the destructive fire of shells may be resisted, and how practical invulnerability to shot may at the same time be secured, we are now building immense and costly ships, merely as a defence against the French vessels, and are neglecting altogether to apply the improvement to the remainder of our vast war navy. Any uninitiated person would suppose that, while wooden line-of-battle ships are subject to speedy destruction by shells, wooden frigates and corvettes are, for some mysterious reason, incombustible, so confidently have we continued to build them up to the present moment.

We have here, truly, a most momentous subject. Our *Warriors*, and *Black Princes*, and *Royal Alfreds*, are virtually line-of-battle ships—the only line-of-battle ships, probably, that will be thought of five or ten years hence. We cannot well send them to protect our foreign commerce, or to quiet our troubles in Japan, or New Zealand, or Mexico; nor could we even afford to keep many of them cruising for a year or two along the coasts of the United States, if our cousins should demand our hostile services. These are purposes for which frigates, corvettes, sloops, brigs, despatch-vessels, and gun-boats, are required; and, unfortunately, all the vessels of these classes which we at present possess and are building are as combustible as those timber line-of-battle ships which we have for ever superseded. Here, then, is a further reconstruction of our navy to be made, as great and as inevitable as any we have made hitherto.

There are, we would observe, weighty reasons of a financial nature for making this new change as speedily as possible. Hitherto the iron-cased ship question has been discussed, both in and out of Parliament, with but little regard to financial economy; so little, in fact, that we are already committed to an expenditure, for ships and docks together, of not

less, probably, than ten millions sterling, without the slightest obstruction having been offered by Parliament to the proposals of the Admiralty. But the apprehension of a French attack is now subsiding, and when the House of Commons assembles again the unanimity with which extraordinary sums of money were voted last year will be gone, and Economy will lift up her voice once more. Moreover, the country will not be blessed, we fear, with that abundance and contentment which prevailed a year ago, and the burden of taxation will be found harder to bear. With these prospects before us, we ought carefully to remember that every month's delay in applying the iron-cased principle to the smaller ships that we build, will add to our financial difficulties sooner or later. Every unprotected wooden ship that we launch is another added to a fleet already virtually condemned; and the sure result of building such vessels will be an extraordinary demand hereafter for millions of money to repair another great deficiency occasioned by neglect.

We believe the Admiralty are mindful of the great importance of these considerations, and although they have not yet begun to build small iron-cased ships, are anxious to do so as soon as they see how to give such ships the necessary qualities. We infer this not only from the enlightened character of the gentlemen now at the Board, but also from the fact, that the successful trials of Captain Coles' cupola shields at Shoeburyness, on board the *Trusty*, were succeeded by honest endeavours on the part of the Admiralty to render them available, if possible, in small ships of war. There are great mechanical difficulties in the way of this; but the Admiralty have certainly exerted themselves to bring the shields into use.

In view of these facts, we propose in this paper to clear away some of those obstructions which have blocked up the path of the naval designer in this matter of iron war ships, and to show that it is perfectly practicable to build excellent iron-cased ships of much smaller dimensions, and, therefore, at much less cost, than any heretofore constructed. In order to treat the subject intelligibly, and so as to convince the judgments of all thoughtful readers, we must make a few preliminary remarks which will materially assist in the development of our views.

In the first place, we avow our confident belief, that the very best basis we can have for our safety at home and our authority abroad, is a plentiful supply of thoroughly efficient and sea-going ships of war. We are not about to denounce fixed coast defences in the abstract, nor shall we even condemn here the outlay which the Government and Parliament have undertaken to make upon permanent fortresses at Spithead and elsewhere. We have resolved to spend ten or twelve millions of money upon these works, and have commenced to spend them with a calm confidence that falls little short of the sublime. It is quite true that recent experiments have shown that the *Warrior* and similar ships are practically impervious to the fire of artillery, even when salvos of the heaviest shot are deliberately concentrated upon a single spot, at a distance of only

200 yards; it is equally true that these ten or twelve millions of money, if expended upon ships, would give us the power of securely blockading every port in France. But in the face of these facts, the fortresses are, we fear, to be built, and it would, perhaps, be unphilosophical, therefore, not to put some little trust in them.

But against the oft-proposed construction of costly ships, to act merely as coast defences, and unadapted for sea service, we must, and will protest, for we have seen the folly of building such vessels demonstrated, over and over again, in our own navy. Our harbours and dockyards are encumbered at the present moment with one set of wooden floating batteries and another set of iron, which never were of any but the most trivial service to us, and are little likely to prove of real value. Yet they cost considerable sums of money, and will probably cost more, before the Admiralty venture to break them up. Then, again, we spent large sums upon those miserable steam block-ships, which never yet did us a shilling's worth of service, and which the Admiralty so entirely ignore that one is never able to discover them in any official return of our naval strength. These, also, were originally fitted as coast-defence vessels, but we know no one who has a good word to speak for them. The truth is, coast-defence vessels are the most unsatisfactory things that can possibly be made. Their prime function is to be perfectly useless, except in most rare and extreme circumstances. If the cost of such vessels were small in proportion to their chance of proving serviceable, it might, we admit, be well to build them. But they really cost nearly as much as sea-going ships, and the very sight of them is therefore an intolerable offence to a people whose commerce extends over every sea, and whose possessions abound in every clime. Whenever we can afford to spend a large sum of money upon ships unfit for sea, we can afford to spend a little more in making them seaworthy, and capable of performing service all over the world.

In the next place, we affirm that iron is preferable to wood as a material for the hulls of fast ocean steam-ships, which have necessarily to bear the strains of enormous engines. It is capable of more rigid combination than wood, and is undoubtedly much more durable when subjected to the wear and tear of gigantic steam forces. The soundness of these opinions is acknowledged by the Admiralty designers, for they have adopted iron as the best material for the hulls of all their iron-cased ships, except in the few instances in which they have converted existing wooden hulls for the purpose, in order to economize time and material.

But iron bottoms have two most serious defects, which have hitherto been thought to render them wholly unfit for ships of war destined for foreign service over long periods. First, they are locally very weak, and yield readily to the blow of a rock when they strike one (whereas wooden ships will sometimes thump uninjured for days together); and, secondly, they get rapidly foul with weeds and barnacles, especially in warm climates. The bottom of the *Warrior*, like that of every other existing iron vessel,

is exposed to both these evils. It has certainly been made as strong as frames placed behind plates can make it; and it has been covered with the best-known material for checking the adhesion of marine substances to it. But, notwithstanding these precautions, if she should strike upon a rock, she would most probably come to grief; and if sent abroad for a year or two, she would foul so seriously as to reduce her speed by several knots.

These difficulties, however, like many others that appall people, only require to be dealt with boldly in order to be overcome. In fact, the mode of overcoming them seems to us perfectly obvious. One simple device sweeps them both away together. We have but to deal with the bottoms of iron ships as we have already dealt with their sides, and coat them with a suitable resisting material. We have had to apply iron to their sides to keep out shell and shot; let us similarly apply wood to their bottoms to keep out rocks; and let us coat this wood with copper, or mixed metal, to keep it clean, just as we coat the bottoms of wooden ships. Thus we can at one stroke, and by the simplest means possible, remedy these two great evils perfectly. There may be—in truth, there are—certain mechanical difficulties to be dealt with; but these are of a trifling nature, and the scientific shipbuilders who designed the *Warrior* could remove them in a single day. We will throw out but one suggestion on the point, viz. that it would probably be well to put the iron plating of the bottom inside the frames, and bring the timber covering immediately against them upon the outside. We really hope that henceforth we shall hear no more of the unfitness of iron ships for foreign service on this ground, seeing that they can be made fit by such a ready process as we have pointed out.

It now becomes necessary to advert to some of the principal features of the iron-cased ships at present built or building in this country. And first we may remark, that in nearly all those which have iron hulls it has been found impossible to protect the entire ship with armour. Those who read our article on the *Warrior* and *La Gloire*, published in February last, will understand the causes of this, and will know how it has happened that in order to completely coat the hull we have been driven, in the new (*Minotaur*) class of ship, to dimensions considerably greater than those first adopted. The *Minotaur*, and her two sister ships will, in fact, be no less than 1,000 tons displacement larger than the *Warrior*; and, notwithstanding their increased size, will be subject (owing to the weight of plating on their extremities) to the disadvantage of plunging heavily in a sea-way, and thus becoming very “wet ships.” In addition to this, they will also be necessarily much slower than the *Warrior*, if 1,250 horse-power engines only are put into them; and if, on the other hand, engines large enough to secure the estimated speed of fourteen knots are given them, then the supply of fuel which they carry must be seriously reduced. The choice of these two evils must be made. What we more particularly wish to point out, however, is that in seven

out of ten of our iron ships, we have contented ourselves with a *limited armour*, and have left large portions of the hulls unprotected in five of them.

Again : in the *Hector*, *Valiant*, *Defence* and *Resistance*, we have been unable, even with this limited armour, to secure a speed of more than about 12 knots, although none of them is of much less than 6,000 tons displacement, and two of them are of considerably more. The *Defence* and *Resistance* will scarcely attain 11 knots. The plated wooden ships now in progress will, we may hope, attain 12; but in order to do so, they require engines of 1,000 horses power, although they are but little larger than the *Hector* class.

Further : if we direct our attention to the number of guns protected in these iron-cased ships, we find that with a displacement of 8,850 tons the *Warrior* and her sister-ships have each a broadside of only 13 guns, or one broadside protected gun to 680 tons of displacement; the *Minotaur*, and other ships of her class, will probably have about one such gun to 500 tons; the *Hector* class, about one to 420 tons; the *Defence* class about one to 835; and the *Royal Alfred* class, say one to 420. In no instance are the guns carried at a greater height than nine feet six inches above the water; in most cases they are no more than seven feet six inches; and in all the wooden ships they will be only seven feet high.

We now see, then, that in the existing iron-cased ships of her Majesty's navy, the Admiralty have been satisfied in most cases with "limited armour;" a comparatively small number of protected guns; a speed of not more, say, than 12 knots; and a battery only 7 feet 6 inches above the water. And in order to obtain even these, they have had to resort in all cases to ships of very nearly 6,000 tons displacement (or weight), and in most cases to ships very much larger than this; and they have likewise had to fit engines of at least 1,000 horses power in every instance where a speed of 12 knots was to be obtained.

Now, we propose to show, upon the evidence of investigations and calculations carried out by ourselves, that by a new application of the principle of "limited armour," it is possible to build iron-cased ships of about one-third the size of the *Minotaur*—or little more than half the size of the smallest of the existing ships—and which shall steam at from 12 to 12½ knots; shall have a goodly number of the largest naval guns protected; shall carry their ports 10 feet above the water; shall be wholly invulnerable at and below the water line; and shall be fit for service all over the world, being fully manned, rigged, and equipped for sea, and, at the same time, lighter and less encumbered with their armour than any one of all the fifteen iron-cased ships which we have built or are building.

The manner in which this may be done will be best explained after considering first what degree of protection from shot we really require in an iron-cased ship. In our belief, all that can be wisely demanded (in view of the great desirability of keeping the weights as small as possible),

is, that the immersed portion of the ship shall be invulnerable throughout; that the men at the guns shall be surrounded by an invulnerable wall or shield; and that the battery thus defended shall be in safe communication with the magazines, &c. below. It will be remembered, that in every ship of war, what are called the vital parts—such as engines, boilers, magazines, and shell-rooms—are all situated below the water, so that if the immersed portion of the ship is made invulnerable, all these are secure from injury. This degree of invulnerability—which is more than some of our ships possess—we certainly consider desirable, and we propose to obtain it by plating the hull of the ship (which we would build wholly of iron) with a belt of thick iron, extending entirely round her in the region of the water line, and by covering a deck, placed at the height of this belt at top, with iron of sufficient thickness to keep out shell and shot. The iron belt on the side will require to be about six inches in average thickness, but that on the deck may be even less than one inch thick, because it will lie in a horizontal position, and can only be struck by shot that have first passed through the side above the water. These two masses of metal—the belt and the deck covering—will give us the invulnerability which we require for the immersed part of the ship.

The next thing to be done is to plant a battery wherever we may deem best, and wall it in with thick iron plates. The best position for the battery will usually be near amidships, and it will be only necessary, in order to defend it, to plate the side along the range of a given number of ports, and then to cross the ship at the ends of the thick plating with iron walls, to protect the gunners from a raking fire. Where it is desirable to economize weight to the utmost, it is advantageous to build these walls at the end of the battery, not directly across the ship, but inclined at an angle of about thirty degrees to the side, in order that they may be brought as close as possible to the extreme guns, and yet not interfere with the training of them. By forming a port in each of these inclined walls, and fitting a moveable topside immediately in the wake of them, provision may be made for increasing either broadside with two guns brought from the opposite side of the battery. If a shot-proof trunk, descending from the interior of the shot-proof battery down to a hatchway through the plated deck below, be now built, we thus complete all the protection for which we can prudently ask. We may, indeed, with advantage add a little thick iron in a few places—around the funnel at the lower part, for example; but we need not dwell here upon these minor features.

On such a ship as this going into action, all the officers and men not engaged at the battery, or in working the ship, might be kept below out of harm's way, provision being made for their rushing up to repel boarders when necessary. The men at the guns would be well protected at their work; supplies of ammunition would be passed up safely through the trunk; and all hands would have the satisfaction of knowing, not only that they had under them a hull that could not possibly be sunk, but

also that no exhausting labour at the pumps would be required of them either during the action or after it was fought out. A large part of the ship would, of course, be exposed to all the injury that shot or shell can do to an ordinary iron hull; but this vulnerable part would be entirely above the water, instead of being partly below it, as in the *Warrior*, *Defence*, and *Hector* classes of ship, and any damage which it might sustain would therefore be of comparatively little importance. The officers and men on the upper deck would be no more exposed than they are in any other ship of war.

It would be of little avail, however, to make these general statements, if we were not prepared to put them to the test of actual calculation. Thousands of people conceive plausible notions upon questions of this kind every year, but no sooner are their schemes tested by an appeal to figures than they vanish at once into thin air. In this instance, however, we have applied the test. By aid of the invaluable set of tables which Mr. Lloyd, the able superintendent of the steam department of the navy, has had compiled from results of trials made in her Majesty's screw vessels, we have been able to determine with accuracy the dimensions of a ship which, with 600 horse-power engines, shall steam at from twelve to twelve and a half knots per hour. By detailed calculations, we find that an iron corvette about 240 feet long, forty-five broad, and with twenty feet mean draught of water, will do this; and with a displacement of but little more than 3,500 tons will carry a protected battery of six or eight of the heaviest 68-pounders, five or six of which may be fought on one side; and, in addition to these, will mount also either two or four pivot guns at the bow and stern, to which protection can be applied in a simple way if desired. This ship, as we have before intimated, may be rigged, manned, provisioned, and otherwise equipped for sea service with as complete efficiency as any corvette now in the navy. She would carry her guns ten feet above the water, and would, therefore, be able to engage an enemy in weather rough enough to compel every iron-cased ship yet in existence to close her ports. With eleven protected guns in her broadside, she would have one gun to about 300 tons of displacement.

It is not desirable, we think, to speak at greater length, or in more detail, of this system of construction at present. It will, no doubt, receive due attention from the Board of Admiralty, and from their professional advisers; and no one who is cognisant of the distinguished ability with which the construction branch of the navy is now managed could desire anything better than this for an improvement in naval architecture. Our high opinion of the naval architects at Whitehall was expressed in February last, when we had the satisfaction of predicting (in opposition to popular suspicions) the great successes which the *Warrior* has since so fully accomplished; and we are glad to know that that opinion has since been officially confirmed by the bestowal of a Companionship of the Bath upon Mr. Isaac Watts, the chief constructor of the navy, and the responsible designer of the ship. We mention the official recognition of

the scientific skill displayed in the *Warrior* with the more pleasure, inasmuch as it is a mark of respect for a profession which has been too much slighted in times past.

But although we are perfectly willing to leave these suggestions in the hands of the proper authorities, it is our duty to say here—because the fact is essential to our main argument—that the system of construction under consideration is by no means limited to any particular size or class of ship. It is applicable, if we mistake not, to vessels of all classes, down even to gunboats, and at least opens the way to the necessary reconstruction of all our smaller descriptions of ships. It is scarcely possible, we believe, to overrate its value even in this respect. But it may have another effect of still greater importance; it may relieve us from the necessity of adding any further to the number of immense and very costly vessels which the iron-cased principle has hitherto imposed upon us. No one can doubt that two or three such ships as the iron-cased corvette which we have described, and which would be fit for service in any quarter of the globe, would also give even a better account of the *Gloire* than the *Warrior* itself—unless, indeed, actions are for the future to be fought by boarding only; and even in that case the smaller vessels would not necessarily lose their advantage. The economy of building vessels thus adapted for all kinds of services, instead of for one special service only, need not be pointed out.

We will not, however, further divert the reader from the great argument which we are anxious above all things to enforce, viz., that since all the ships which we are now building, from frigates down to gunboats, are as combustible as our abandoned line-of-battle ships, we are undoubtedly exposing ourselves to the certainty of having to replace them all with iron ships, at an immense cost in money, if not in reputation. It would be vain to blink the obvious considerations which enforce this conclusion. If this change be not imperative, then was not the introduction of iron-cased ships of any kind imperative; for if shell-fire will not burn small ships, it will not burn large ones.

It is quite true that we are not at present threatened with fleets of foreign iron-cased ships of the smaller sort (although both the French and the Americans have made beginnings in this respect); but our duty in the matter is not the less clear or immediate on this account. When the necessity of building such ships is once established, every thousand pounds spent upon new ships of the condemned kind is a thousand pounds all but thrown away, and a thousand pounds that will probably have to be replaced by the nation. It is on this ground that we suggest the instant adoption of the iron-cased principle in our smaller ships, if the mode of construction which we have described be practicably available, as we think it is, or if any better mode of accomplishing the object can be devised. No extraordinary votes of money are required to give effect to our suggestion; on the contrary, our prime object is to avoid the necessity for such votes, by beginning at once what we know must be done. It is in order

that the money which the House of Commons will, ere long, be called upon to vote for new ships, may not be expended upon ships built of a material already condemned, that we urge the immediate commencement of this further reconstruction of the navy.

Nor is it on financial grounds only that we advocate the great change from wood to iron throughout all classes of her Majesty's ships. It is at the further peril of our reputation that we dare neglect it. How can we retain the character which is yet left us, or recover that which we have lost, if we persist in building combustible ships, when we know perfectly well how to build incombustible ones, and know also that, while the material for the former has to be brought from afar, that for the latter lies in abundance at our feet? On the other hand, how great a stimulus will be given to that respect which the world still feels for us, if the announcement goes forth that henceforward the fleets of England, from the largest ship to the smallest, will be made impervious to that terrible shell-fire which has justly caused such terror since the burning of the Turkish fleet at Sinope, and before which our own ships of the line recoiled at Sebastopol! Nothing short of this complete reconstruction of our navy can do justice to us, either as a scientific, a manufacturing, or a commercial people; nor can anything less preserve us from another national humiliation, should the French Emperor be pleased to inflict it upon us.

It would be a great misapprehension to suppose that we put forward these representations with the view of influencing the measures of the Admiralty, rather than of convincing the public judgment. On the contrary, the new Controller of the Navy is a highly enterprising officer, and there are other officers at the Board of Admiralty equally alive, we believe, to the necessities of the times. In truth, we are fast approaching a period when the Admiralty are likely to be in advance of public opinion on questions of this kind. Already it is both an unquestionable and a painful fact, that some of the wisest and most enlightened measures adopted in reference to the navy, are made the occasion of most embarrassing criticisms on the part of men who might be expected to gladly support them. Even the *Warrior* herself—at once the most gigantic and most successful step ever taken in naval architecture—has, by some persons of influence, been made a subject of bitter reproach, both to the Board of Admiralty who ordered her, and to the naval architects who exhibited unrivalled skill in her design, her distinguishing merits being in almost every instance the most offensive parts of her. This is an evil which it is incumbent upon all who wish well to the State to guard against; and we know of no better method of doing this than that of enlightening the public as fully as possible. It is with this view that we put forward the facts and arguments contained in this article, and it is with this view also that we commend them to the most serious attention of our readers.

Mare Mediterraneum.

A LINE of light! It is the inland sea,
The least in compass, and the first in fame;
The gleaming of its waves recalls to me
Full many an ancient name.

As through my dreamland float the days of old,
The forms and features of their heroes shine;
I see Phœnician sailors bearing gold
From the Tartessian mine.

Seeking new worlds, storm-toss'd Ulysses ploughs
Remoter surges of the winding main;
And Grecian captains come to pay their vows,
Or gather up the slain.

I see the temples of the "violet crown"
Burn upward in the hour of glorious flight;
And mariners of uneclipsed renown,
Who won the great sea-fight.

I hear the dashing of a thousand oars,
The angry waters take a crimson dye,
A thousand echoes vibrate from the shores
With Athens' battle cry.

Again the Carthaginian rovers sweep
With sword and commerce on from shore to shore
In visionary storms the breakers leap
Round Syrtis, as of yore.

Victory, sitting on the seven hills,
 Had gain'd the world when she had master'd thee ;
 Thy bosom with the Roman war-note thrills,
 Waves of the inland sea !

Next, singing as they sail, in shining ships,
 I see the monarch minstrels of romance ;
 And hear their praises murmur'd through the lips
 Of the fair maids of France.

Across the deep another music swells,
 On Adrian bays a later splendour smiles,
 Power hails the marble city where she dwells,
 Queen of a hundred isles.

But the light fades, the vision wears away ;
 I see the mist above the dreary wave ;
 Blow, winds of Freedom, give another day
 Of glory to the brave.

J. N.

CETTE,

July, 1861.

The Excursion Train.



FROM the moment when we turn our backs on the half-way house, toil over the hill, and descend into the valley of old age, we are astonished to find how space and bulk seem to have diminished. The street which we remember in our youth so broad and imposing has shrunk into a close alley; the river has become a ditch, the square a hen-walk, and the stately mansion which we once looked upon with awe, a dwarfed hut which we now feel bound to despise.

Our views seem to grow wider as we grow older, our desires less simple, and we wonder how we could ever have been happy while so cabined, cribbed, and confined. We laugh at the humble pleasures of our grandfathers, and are ready to welcome any toy that is startling and new. We throw ourselves into the arms of competing railway companies, because they can give us excitement, novelty, and change. As the rocking-horse is to the infant, as the pony or the flying swing is to the youth, so is the excursion train to the man. He enters it for a few pence, and swifter than the genii bore Aladdin from city to city, he is carried from town to country, or from country to town. Clerk, shopman, servant, costermonger or sweep, can cling to the long tail of the fiery steed, and ride rough-shod over the laws of time and space. What kings have sighed for, what poets have dreamed of, what martyrs may have been burnt for predicting the coming of, is now as common as blackberries and threepenny ale. The magic Bronze Horse is now snorting at every man's door. He is a fine animal, if only properly managed, and may be driven by a child; but woe upon you, if you let him break the reins. He has battered down stone walls; hurled hundreds over precipices; devoured thousands of stage-coaches, stage-coachmen, Thames' watermen, whistling

waggoners, country carriers, and Gravesend hoys. This is one side of the account. On the other side he has joined mother to son, husband to wife, brother to sister, friend to friend. He has cheapened food, and fire, and clothing for rich and poor; he has made many a death-bed happy, and many a wedding-party glad; he has improved Richard Turpin, and all his followers, off the face of the earth, and has even taught the slouching gipsy that there is a cheaper way of travelling than going on the tramp.



A Mile an Hour.

We are now all fond of excursion trains, more or less. At first, we regarded them with aversion; we then approached them timidly; we were lifted on to them by friends and teachers; we trotted them out slowly, holding our breath, and by degrees we saw that we could keep our seat, and yet glide past mountains, hedges, and trees. We then applied the spur, and were shot through dark tunnels on to the sea-shore, in a whirlwind of thunder and white steam. Familiarity breeds contempt. We learned to despise short distances, and twenty miles an hour. We asked for more. Our tastes grew artificial, as our palate was destroyed

by highly-seasoned food. We deserted our old pleasures and our old friends. Our withered tea-gardens on the borders of the city beckoned to us in vain, and looked at us reproachfully as we hurried past on our mad steed. Our old taverns pined for our presence; our fishing-punts, on the London rivers, rotted with neglect; the backwoods of Hornsey were no longer haunted by our footsteps, and the slopes of Hampstead became a desert. We pushed forward, farther and farther still, into the bowels of the earth. Like the wild huntsman, in the German ballad, we



A Mile a Minute.

glared upon passers-by, and straightway they became infected with the same restless activity. The whole town was on the move. Barbers, pot-boys, and milkmen disappeared for a few hours, and came back with strange stories of mountains, lakes, and caverns. Our boys were no longer content to read of inland wonders; they saved up their stray money, and went to the "Devil's Hole," and the "Dropping Well of Knaresborough." Children taunted each other in the street with the distances they had travelled, sitting upon the laps of their mothers, as if

in a dream. Surly cathedral cities were hustled by cockney crowds and Stonehenge was turned into a cool summer-house for Bethnal Green gipsy parties. All this, and more, has been done within the last twenty years, and in an age which is too wise to believe in miracles!

Let us peep inside one of these excursion trains, going to Dover and back for half-a-crown, and take a few portraits of the travellers as they sit in a row.

The magic bronze horse has slackened his speed, and the long tail of carriages is dragging along at the rate of a mile an hour. The young commercial traveller in the corner soon grows weary of a few minutes' delay, even though it may save him from a damaging collision, for he has been born in an age of high-pressure speed, and has fed upon express trains almost from his cradle. He has been spending the Sunday in town amongst his friends, and is now going down to join his samples by a cheap Monday's excursion train. His gaping has a sympathetic effect upon the female a little farther up on the same side, and they both yawn in unison.

The second traveller, nursing his hat with a painful expression of face, has fixed his eyes on an advertising placard stuck on the roof of the carriage. This placard gives a picture of a man suffering from violent *tic douloureux*, and tells the passengers where they may apply for an infallible remedy. This mode of advertising is dismal but effective, and as the traveller gives an unconscious imitation of the picture with his agonized face, he inwardly resolves to become a customer for the remedy.

The next passenger, with the bald head and the drawn-down cheeks, is one of those deceptive men whom you meet with in every society. He looks like a banker, a manager of an insurance company, or a lecturer upon political economy. You suppose him to be a perfect cyclopædia of exact information—a man who has no end of statistics in his shiny head, and you assume that his taciturnity is the result of deep thought on some of the great problems of existence. You will be surprised to learn that he lives upon the severity of his appearance, and is nothing more than a head-waiter at a sea-side tavern.

The sour-looking old gentleman, twiddling his thumbs at the farther end of the carriage, whose broad hat nearly shuts out our view of the drifting shower, has no business in a train of pleasure. He has joined the company at a side station on the road, and is going to get out at another side station to dun some poor tenants for back rent. This may be a very necessary thing to do, but a holiday train is hardly the proper vehicle to help him to do it.

The pace changes, and the magic bronze horse is tearing along at the rate of a mile a minute.

The old gentleman in another carriage leans on his umbrella, and blinks as he feels his cheeks buffeted by the fresh air, laden as it is with the scent of new hay. The young woman next to him, who is running

down on a flying visit to her mother, nurses her plump boy, and tells him to look out for grandma over the hills. The cheerful passenger at her side draws his face into a hundred wrinkles as he watches the trees, stations, and churches whirling past the window; the fat gentleman laughs, and shakes like a jelly, as he proves the speed by his substantial watch; and the Jewish-looking gentleman in the corner settles down into a self-satisfied smirk, as he feels that he is getting the fullest value for his half-crown ticket.

In another carriage we are amused by the agreeable man. He knows the name of every station we pass, how far it is from London, and what it is famous for. He has travelled a good deal on railways, and is full of anecdotes. He advises some of the passengers where to go for a comfortable dinner when they get to Dover, and tells them all the points worth seeing in that ancient town. He pulls up the window to oblige the ladies, and is particular in asking how high he shall fix it. He carries a number of travelling appliances with him, some of the most ingenious kind, and is never without a pocket corkscrew. He even carries a shoehorn enclosed in a leathern case, a folding cap in a pouch, and a few sweet lozenges to please the children. He is always ready to listen to a story or to make a joke, and to take advantage of anything he may meet with on the journey.

"Everybody's sauce?" we may hear him say, as he draws attention to a well-known advertising placard. "I never heard of such impudence! We may stand some people's sauce—people we have a respect for—but I don't think we can stand everybody's sauce. What do you say, sir?"

This last remark is purposely addressed to the disagreeable man, who sits with his good-humoured wife opposite, and who has been sulking ever since the train started. The disagreeable man is not happy in his mind. He objects to excursion trains, and yet he uses them. He cannot imagine why so many people go to Dover—he cannot see anything in Dover himself, but chalk and soldiers; certainly nothing to run after at such a pace. He thinks every town much finer than the one he is going to; every day much pleasanter than the one he is travelling on; and every carriage much more comfortable than the one he is sitting in. He cannot think that hard benches are half so snug as the old stage-coaches, or that being shut up in a close varnished compartment is equal to riding on the box-seat. His round-faced pleasant wife tries to persuade him that everything is for the best, but he is not open to conviction. Poor fellow! he merits some little compassion as he sits in an excursion train, for he is a broken-down proprietor of a stage coach run off the road by a branch line of railway.

As we draw near our journey's end we peep into another carriage, and find there a most obtrusive traveller. We can give him no better title than the cheap swell, because he is a Frankenstein raised by the cheap tailor. He looks like a living advertisement for "popular" dress and jewellery; for coloured shirts with Greek names; for the latest style of cheap coat, and the latest extravagance in cheap trowsers. He is like a picture taken out of a certain handbook of East-end fashion, and usually labelled "in this



The Agreeable Man.



The Disagreeable Man.



The Cheap Swell.



The Two Bottles.

style, forty-two and six." He smokes a bad, rank, cheap cigar, in preference to an honest pipe, and smokes it regardless of ladies or fellow-passengers. He lives for appearance, for external show, for seeming what he is not, and comes to the country chiefly to astonish villagers with his town manners. He firmly believes that he will marry an heiress of unbounded wealth, who will dote upon his turned-up nose and tobacco-scented hair. Under this impression he will show himself on the parade when he gets to Dover, with his hooked stick in his teeth, and his shoes fresh-polished by a boy at the station. He leans out of the carriage-window, as soon as the train arrives within sight of the sea, as if the prospect was intended for him and no other passenger.

Facing this cheap swell are two females, one young and the other middle-aged, who may be distinguished by the title of the two bottles. They are mother and daughter; but while the old lady is stout, flushed, vulgar, and not above carrying the meat and beer-bottle, the youngest wears tight kid gloves, an Eugenie hair front, and refreshes herself now and then with a sniff of Eau-de-Cologne. The old lady has given her daughter a showy education, with a view of making her a "better woman than her mother," and has only produced a piece of affected gentility,—almost as repulsive as the cheap swell—who thinks herself too good for her company.

These are only a few of the commonplace passengers—amiable and unamiable, grateful and ungrateful—who ride on the magic bronze horse, day after day, and are so crammed with wonders that they think nothing of it.



Agnes of Sorrento.

CHAPTER XVI.

ELSIE PUSHES HER SCHEME.

THE good Father Antonio returned from his conference with the cavalier with many subjects for grave pondering. This man, as he conjectured, so far from being an enemy either of Church or State, was, in fact, in many respects in the same position with his revered master,—as nearly so as the position of a layman was likely to resemble that of an ecclesiastic. His denial of the Visible Church, as represented by the Pope and cardinals, sprang not from an irreverent, but from a reverent spirit.

His kind and fatherly heart was interested in the brave young nobleman. He sympathized fully with the situation in which he stood, and he even wished success to his love; but then how was he to help him with Agnes, and, above all, with her old grandmother, without entering on the awful task of condemning and exposing that sacred authority which all the Church had so many years been taught to regard as infallibly inspired? Long had all the truly spiritual members of the Church who gave ear to the teachings of Savonarola, felt that the nearer they followed Christ the more open was their growing antagonism to the Pope and the cardinals; but still they hung back from the responsibility of inviting the people to an open revolt.

Father Antonio felt his soul deeply stirred with the news of the excommunication of his saintly master; and he marvelled, as he tossed on his restless bed through the night, how he was to meet the storm. He might have known, had he been able to look into a crowded assembly in Florence about this time, and hear the unterrified monk thus meet the news of his excommunication:—

“There have come decrees from Rome, have there? They call me a son of perdition. Well, thus may you answer:—He to whom you give this name hath neither favourites nor concubines, but gives himself solely to preaching Christ. His spiritual sons and daughters, those who listen to his doctrine, do not pass their time in infamous practices: they confess, they receive the communion, they live honestly. This man gives himself up to exalt the Church of Christ: you to destroy it. The time approaches for opening the secret chamber; we will give but one turn of the key, and there will come out thence such an infection, such a stench of this city of Rome, that the odour shall spread through all Christendom, and all the world shall be sickened.”

But Father Antonio was of himself wholly unable to come to such a courageous result, though capable of following to the death the master who should do it for him. His was the true artist nature, as unfit to deal with rough human forces as a bird that flies through the air is unfitted to a

hand-to-hand grapple with the armed forces of the lower world. Yet there is strength in these artist natures. Curious computations have been made of the immense muscular power that is brought into exercise when a swallow skims so smoothly through the blue sky; but the strength is of a kind unadapted to mundane uses, and needs the ether for its display. Father Antonio could create the beautiful; he could warm, could elevate, could comfort; and when a stronger nature went before him, he could follow with an unquestioning tenderness of devotion: but he wanted the sharp, downright power of mind that could cut and cleave its way through the rubbish of the past, when its institutions, instead of a commodious dwelling, had come to be a loathsome prison. Besides, the true artist has ever an enchanted island of his own; and when this world perplexes and wearies him, he can sail far away and lay his soul down to rest, as Cythera bore the sleeping Ascanius far from the din of battle, to sleep on flowers and breathe the odour of a hundred undying altars to Beauty.

Therefore, after a restless night, the good monk arose in the first purple of the dawn, and instinctively betook him to a review of his drawings for the shrine, as a refuge from troubled thought. He took his sketch of the Madonna and Child into the morning twilight and began meditating thereon, while the clouds that lined the horizon were glowing rosy purple and violet with the approaching day.

"See there!" he said to himself, "yonder clouds have exactly the rosy purple of the cyclamen which my little Agnes loves so much;—yes, I am resolved that this cloud on which our Mother standeth shall be of a cyclamen colour. And there is that star, like as it looked yesterday evening, when I mused upon it. Methought I could see our Lady's clear brow, and the radiance of her face, and I prayed that some little power might be given to show forth that which transports me."

And as the monk plied his pencil, touching here and there, and elaborating the outlines of his drawing, he sang,—

"Ave, Maris Stella,
Dei mater alma,
Atque semper virgo,
Felix cœli porta!

"Virgo singularis,
Inter omnes mitis,
Nos culpis solutos
Mites fac et castos!

"Vitam præsta puram,
Iter para tutum,
Ut videntes Jesum
Semper collatetur!"*

* "Hail, thou Star of Ocean,
Thou for ever virgin,
Mother of the Lord!
Blessed gate of Heaven,
Take our heart's devotion!

"Virgin one and only,
Meekest mid them all,
From our sins set free,
Make us pure like thee,
Freed from passion's thrall!

"Grant that in pure living,
Through safe paths below,
For ever seeing Jesus,
Rejoicing we may go!"

As the monk sang, Agnes soon appeared at the door.

"Ah! my little bird, you are there!" he said, looking up.

Agnes, coming forward, looked over his shoulder at his work, and returning his greeting, asked,—

"Did you find that young sculptor?"

"That I did: he's a brave boy, too, who will row down the coast and dig us marble from an old heathen temple, which we will baptize into the name of Christ and his Mother," said the monk, stepping into his little sleeping-room; "this lily he sent you; see, I have kept it in water all night."

"Poor Pietro, that was good of him!" said Agnes. "I would thank him if I could. But, uncle," she added, in a hesitating voice, "did you see anything of that—other one?"

"That I did, child; and talked long with him."

"Ah, uncle, is there any hope for him?"

"Yes, there is hope—great hope. In fact, he has promised to receive me again, and I have hopes of leading him to the sacrament of confession; after that——"

"And then the Pope will forgive him!" said Agnes, joyfully.

The face of the monk suddenly fell; he was silent, and went on retouching his drawing.

"Do you not think he will?" asked Agnes, earnestly. "You said the Church was ever ready to receive the repentant."

"The True Church will receive him," answered the monk, evasively; "yes, my little one, there is no doubt of it."

"And it is not true that he is captain of a band of robbers in the mountains?" pursued Agnes. "May I tell Father Francesco that it is not so?"

"Child, this young man hath suffered a grievous wrong and injustice; for he is lord of an ancient and noble estate, out of which he has been driven by the cruel injustice of a most wicked and abominable man, the Duke di Valentinos,* who hath caused the death of his brothers and sisters, and ravaged the country around with fire and sword, so that he hath been driven with his retainers to a fortress in the mountains."

"But," said Agnes, with flushed cheeks, "why does not our blessed Father excommunicate this wicked duke? Surely this knight hath erred; instead of taking refuge in the mountains, he ought to have fled with his followers to Rome, where the dear Father of the Church hath a house for all the oppressed. It must be so lovely to be the father of all men, and to take in and comfort all those who are distressed and sorrowful, and to right the wrongs of all that are oppressed, as our dear Father at Rome doth!"

The monk looked up at Agnes' clear glowing face with a sort of wondering pity.

* Cæsar Borgia was created Duc de Valentinois by Louis XII. of France.

"Dear little child," he said, "there is a Jerusalem above which is the mother of us all, and these things are done there.

*'Coelestis urbs Jerusalem,
Beata pacis visio,
Quæ celsa de viventibus
Saxis ad astra tolleris,
Sponsæque ritu cingeris
Mille angelorum millibus!'*"

The face of the monk glowed as he repeated this ancient hymn of the Church,* as if the remembrance of that general assembly and church of the first-born gave him comfort in his depression.

Agnes felt perplexed, and looked earnestly at her uncle as he stooped over his drawing: she saw that there were deep lines of anxiety on his usually clear, placid face,—a look as of one who struggles mentally with some untold trouble.

"Uncle," she said, hesitatingly, "may I tell Father Francesco what you have been telling me of this young man?"

"No, my little one, it were not best. In fact, dear child, there be many things in his case impossible to explain, even to you. But he is not so altogether hopeless as you thought; in truth, I have great hopes of him. I have admonished him to come here no more, but I shall see him again this evening."

Agnes wondered at the heaviness of her own little heart, as her kind old uncle spoke of his coming there no more. Awhile ago she dreaded his visits as a most fearful temptation, and thought perhaps he might come at any hour; now she was sure he would not, and it was astonishing what a weight fell upon her.

"Why am I not thankful?" she asked herself. "Why am I not joyful? Why should I wish to see him again, when I should only be tempted to sinful thoughts, and when my dear uncle, who can do so much for him, has his soul in charge? And what is this which is so strange in his case? There is some mystery, after all,—something, perhaps, which I ought not to wish to know. Ah, how little can we know of this great wicked world, and of the reasons which our superiors give for their conduct! It is ours humbly to obey, without a question or a doubt. Holy Mother, may I not sin through a vain curiosity or self-will! May I ever say, as thou didst, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord! be it unto me according to His word!'"

And Agnes went about her morning devotions with fervent zeal, and did not see the monk as he dropped the pencil, and, covering his face with his robe, seemed to wrestle in some agony of prayer.

* This very ancient hymn is the fountain-head from which through various languages have trickled the various hymns of the Celestial City, such as—

"Jerusalem, my happy home!"

and Quarles's—

"O mother dear, Jerusalem!"

"Shepherd of Israel," he said, "why hast Thou forgotten this vine of Thy planting? The boar out of the wood doth waste it, the wild beasts of the field doth devour it. Dogs have encompassed Thy beloved; the assembly of the violent have surrounded him. How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge?"

"Now, really, brother," said Elsie, coming towards him, and interrupting his meditations in her bustling, business fashion, yet speaking in a low tone that Agnes should not hear, "I want you to help me with this child in a good common-sense fashion: none of your high-flying notions about saints and angels, but a little good common talk for every-day people that have their bread and salt to look after. The fact is, brother, this girl must be married. I went last night to talk with Antonio's mother, and the way is all open as well as any living girl could desire. Antonio is a trifle slow, and the high-flying hussies call him stupid, but his mother says a better son never breathed, and he is as obedient to all her orders now as when he was three years old. She has laid up plenty of household stuff for him, and good hard gold pieces to boot: she let me count them myself, and I showed her that which I had scraped together, and she counted it, and we agreed that the children of such a marriage would come into the world with something to stand on. Now Agnes is fond of you, brother, and perhaps it would be well for you to broach the subject. The fact is, when I begin to talk she gets her arms round my old neck and falls to weeping and kissing me at such a rate as makes a fool of me. If the child would only be rebellious, one could do something; but this love takes all the stiffness out of one's joints: she tells me she does not want a husband, and she will be content to live with me all her life. The saints know it isn't for my happiness to put her out of my old arms; but I can't last for ever: my old back grows weaker every year; and Antonio has strong arms to defend her from all those roystering fellows who fear neither God nor man, and swoop up young maids as kites do chickens. Then he is as gentle and manageable as a this-year ox; Agnes can lead him by the horn: she will be a perfect queen over him; for he has been brought up to mind the women."

"Well, sister," asked the monk, "hath our little maid any acquaintance with this man? Have they ever spoken together?"

"Not much. I have never brought them to a very close acquaintance; and that is what is to be done. Antonio is not much of a talker; to tell the truth, he has not so much to say as our Agnes: but the man's place is not to say fine things, but to do the hard work that shall support the household."

"Then Agnes hath not even seen him?"

"Yes, at different times I have bid her regard him, and said to her, 'There goes a proper man and a good Christian—a man who minds his work and is obedient to his old mother: such a man will make a right good husband for some girl some day.'"

"And did you ever see that her eye followed him with pleasure?"

"No, neither him nor any other man; for my little Agnes hath no thought of that kind; but, once married, she will like him fast enough. All I want is to have you begin the subject, and get it into her head a little."

Father Antonio was puzzled how to meet this direct urgency of his sister. He could not explain to her his own private reasons for knowing that any such attempt would be utterly vain, and only bring needless distress on his little favourite. He therefore answered,—

"My good sister, all such thoughts lie so far out of the sphere of us monks, that you could not choose a worse person for such an errand. I have never had any communings with the child than touching the beautiful things of my art, and concerning hymns and prayers, and the lovely world of saints and angels, where they neither marry nor are given in marriage; and I should only spoil your enterprise, if I should put my unskilful hand to it."

"At any rate," persisted Elsie, "don't you approve of my plan?"

"I should approve of anything that would make our dear little one safe and happy; but I would not force the matter against her inclinations. You will always regret it, if you make so good a child shed one needless tear. After all, sister, what need of haste? 'Tis a young bird yet. Why push it out of the nest? When once it is gone, you will never get it back. Let the pretty one have her little day to play and sing and be happy. Does she not make this garden a sort of paradise with her little ways and her sweet words? These all belong to you now, my sister; but once she is given to another, there is no saying what may come. One thing only may you count on with certainty; that these happy days, when she is all day by your side and sleeps in your bosom all night, are over: she will belong to you no more, but to a strange man who hath neither toiled nor wrought for her; and all her pretty ways and dutiful thoughts must be for him."

"I know it, I know it," said Elsie, with a sudden wrench of that jealous love which is ever natural to strong, passionate natures. "I'm sure it isn't for my own sake I urge this. I grudge him the girl. After all, he is but a stupid head. What has he ever done, that such good fortune should befall him? He ought to fall down and kiss the dust of my shoes for such a gift; but I doubt me much if he will ever think to do it. These men think nothing too good for them. I believe, if one of the crowned saints in heaven were offered them to wife, they would think it all quite natural, and not a whit less than their requirements."

"Well, then, sister," returned the monk, soothingly, "why press this matter? why hurry? The poor little child is young; let her frisk like a lamb, and dance like a butterfly, and sing her hymns every day like a bright bird. Surely the Apostle saith, 'He that giveth his maid in marriage doeth well, but he that giveth her not doeth better.'"

"But I have opened the subject already to old Meta," pleaded Elsie, "and if I don't pursue it, she will take it into her head that her son is

lightly regarded ; and then her back will be up, and one may lose the chance : on the whole, considering the money and the fellow, I don't know a safer way to settle the girl."

"Well, sister, as I have remarked," pursued the monk, "I could not order my speech to propose anything of this kind to a young maid ; I should so bungle that I might spoil all. You must even propose it yourself."

"I would not have undertaken it," said Elsie, "had I not been frightened by that hook-nosed old kite of a cavalier that has been sailing and perching round. We are two lone women here, and the times are so unsettled, one never knows that hath so fair a prize but she may be carried off, and no redress from any quarter."

"You might lodge her in the convent," suggested the monk.

"Yes ; and then, the first thing I should know, they would have got her away from me entirely. I have been well pleased to have her much with the sisters hitherto, because it kept her from hearing the foolish talk of girls and gallants ; for such a flower would have had every wasp and bee buzzing round it. But now the time is coming to marry her, I much doubt these nuns. There's old Jocunda is a sensible woman, who knew something of the world before she went there ; but the Mother Theresa knows no more than a baby ; and they would take her in, and make her as white and as thin as that moon yonder. Little good should I have of her then, for I have no vocation for the convent ; it would kill me in a week. No ; she has seen enough of the convent for the present. I will even take the risk of watching her myself. Little has this gallant seen of her, though he has tried hard enough ! But to-day I may venture to take her down with me."

Father Antonio felt a little conscience-smitten in listening to these triumphant assertions of old Elsie ; for he knew that she would pour all her vials of wrath on his head, did she know, that, owing to his absence from his little charge, the dreaded invader had managed to have two interviews with her grandchild, on the very spot that Elsie deemed the fortress of security ; but he wisely kept his own counsel. In truth, the gentle monk lived so much in the unreal and celestial world of beauty, that he was by no means a skilful guide for the straits of common life. Love, other than that ethereal kind which aspires towards paradise, was a stranger to his thoughts, and he constantly erred in attributing to other people natures and purposes as unworldly and spiritual as his own. Thus had he fallen, in his utter simplicity, into the attitude of a gobetween, protecting the advances of a young lover with the shadow of his monk's gown ; and he became awkwardly conscious that, if Elsie should find out the whole truth, there would be no possibility of convincing her that what had been done in such sacred simplicity on all sides was not the basest manœuvring.

Elsie took Agnes down with her to the old stand in the gateway of the town. On their way, as had probably been arranged, Antonio met them. We may have introduced him to the reader before, who likely enough has forgotten by this time our portraiture ; so we shall say again that the man

was past thirty, tall, straight, and well-made, even to the tapering of his well-formed limbs, as are the generality of the peasantry of that favoured region. His teeth were white as sea-pearl; his cheek, though swarthy, had a deep, healthy flush; and his great black eyes looked straight out from under their long silky lashes, just as do the eyes of the beautiful oxen of his country, with a languid, changeless tranquillity, betokening a good digestion, and a well-fed, kindly animal nature. He was evidently a creature that had been nourished on sweet juices and developed in fair pastures, under kindly influences of sun and weather; one who would draw patiently in harness, if required, without troubling his handsome head how he came there, and, his labour being done, would stretch his healthy body to ruminate, and rest with unreflecting quietude.

He had been duly lectured by his mother, this morning, on the propriety of commencing his wooing, and was coming towards them with a bouquet in his hand.

"See there," said Elsie; "there is our young neighbour Antonio coming towards us. There is a youth whom I am willing you should speak to; none of your ruffling gallants, but steady as an ox at his work, and as kind at the crib. Happy will the girl be that gets him for a husband!"

Agnes was somewhat troubled and saddened this morning, and absorbed in cares quite new to her life before; but her nature was ever kindly and social, and it had been laid under so many restrictions by her grandmother's close method of bringing up, that it was always ready to rebound in favour of anybody to whom she allowed her to show kindness.

So, when the young man stopped and shyly reached forth to her a knot of scarlet poppies intermingled with bright vetches and wild blue larkspurs, she took it graciously, and, beaming a kind smile into his face, frankly said—

"Thank you, my good Antonio!" Then fastening them in front of her bodice,—*"There, they are beautiful!"* she said, looking up with the simple satisfaction of a child.

"They are not half so beautiful as you are," was the naïve reply of the young peasant; "everybody likes you."

"You are very kind, I am sure," returned Agnes. "I like everybody, as far as grandmamma thinks right."

"I am glad of that," said Antonio, "because then I hope you will like me."

"Oh, yes, certainly I do; grandmamma says you are very good, and I like all good people."

"Well, then, pretty Agnes," said the young man, "let me carry your basket."

"Oh, no; it does not tire me."

"But I should like to do something for you," insisted the young man, blushing deeply.

Agnes consented, and began to wonder at the length of time her grandmother allowed this conversation to go on without interrupting it, as she

generally had done when a young man was in the case. Quite to her astonishment, her venerable relative, instead of sticking as close to her as her shadow, was walking forward very fast without looking behind.

"Now, Holy Mother," said that excellent matron, "do help this young man to bring this affair out straight, and give an old woman, who has had a world of troubles, a little peace in her old age!"

Agnes found herself, therefore, quite unusually situated, alone in the company of a handsome young man, and apparently with the consent of her grandmother. Some girls might have felt emotions of embarrassment, or even alarm, at this new situation; but the sacred loneliness and seclusion in which Agnes had been educated had given her a confiding fearlessness, such as voyagers have found in the birds of bright foreign islands which have never been invaded by man. She looked up at Antonio with a pleased, admiring smile; much such as she would have given, if a great handsome stag, or other sylvan companion, had stepped from the forest and looked a friendship at her through his large liquid eyes. She seemed, in an innocent, frank way, to like to have him walking by her, and thought him very good to carry her basket; though, as she told him, it did not tire her in the least.

"Nor does it tire me, pretty Agnes," said he, with an embarrassed laugh. "See what a great fellow I am—how strong! Look—I can bend an iron bar in my hands! I am as strong as an ox; and I should like always to use my strength for you."

"Should you? How very kind of you! It is very Christian to use one's strength for others, like the good Saint Christopher."

"But I would use my strength for you because—I love you, gentle Agnes!"

"That is right, too," replied Agnes. "We must all love one another, my good Antonio."

"You must know what I mean," said the young man. "I mean that I want to marry you."

"I am sorry for that, Antonio," replied Agnes, gravely; "because I do not want to marry you. I am never going to marry anybody."

"Ah, girls always talk so, my mother told me; but nobody ever heard of a girl that did not want a husband," said Antonio, with simplicity.

"I believe girls generally do, Antonio; but I do not: my desire is to go to the convent."

"To the convent, pretty Agnes? Of all things, what should you want to go to the convent for? You never had any trouble. You are young, and handsome, and healthy, and almost any of the fellows would think himself fortunate to get you."

"I would go there to live for God and pray for souls," said Agnes.

"But your grandmother will never let you; she means you shall marry me. I heard her and my mother talking about it last night; and my mother bade me come on, for she said it was all settled."

"I never heard anything of it," protested Agnes, now for the first time

feeling troubled. "But, my good Antonio, if you really do like me and wish me well, you will not want to distress me?"

"Certainly not."

"Well, it *will* distress me very, very much, if you persist in wanting to marry me, and if you say any more on the subject."

"Is that really so?" inquired Antonio, fixing his great velvet eyes with an honest stare on Agnes.

"Yes, it is so, Antonio; you may rely upon it."

"But look here, Agnes, are you quite sure? Mother says girls do not always know their mind."

"But I know mine, Antonio. Now you really will distress and trouble me very much, if you say anything more of this sort."

"I declare I am sorry for it," said the young man. "Look ye, Agnes—I did not care half as much about it this morning as I do now. Mother has been saying this great while that I must have a wife, that she was getting old; and this morning she told me to speak to you. I thought you would be all ready—indeed I did."

"My good Antonio, there are a great many very handsome girls who would be glad, I suppose, to marry you. I believe other girls do not feel as I do. *Giulietta* used to laugh and tell me so."

"That *Giulietta* was a splendid girl," said Antonio. "She used to make great eyes at me, and try to make me play the fool; but my mother would not hear of her. Now she has gone off with a fellow to the mountains."

"*Giulietta* gone?"

"Yes; haven't you heard of it? She's gone with one of the fellows of that dashing young robber-captain that has been round our town so much lately. All the girls are wild after these mountain fellows. A good, honest boy like me, that hammers away at his trade, they think nothing of; whereas one of these fellows with a feather in his cap has only to twinkle his finger at them, and they are off like a bird."

The blood rose in Agnes' cheeks at this very unconscious remark; but she walked along for some time with a countenance of grave reflection.

They had now gained the street of the city, where old *Elsie* stood at a little distance waiting for them.

"Well, Agnes," asked Antonio, "so you really are in earnest?"

"Certainly I am."

"Well, then, let us be good friends, at any rate," said the young man.

"Oh, to be sure I will," replied Agnes, smiling with all the brightness her lovely face was capable of. "You are a kind, good man, and I like you very much. I will always remember you kindly."

"Well, good-bye, then," said Antonio, offering his hand.

"Good-bye," returned Agnes, cheerfully giving hers.

Elsie, beholding the cordiality of this parting, comforted herself that all was right, and ruffled all her feathers with the satisfied pride of a matron whose family plans are succeeding.

"After all," she said to herself, "brother was right; best let young folks settle these matters themselves. Now see the advantage of such an education as I have given Agnes! Instead of being betrothed to a good, honest, forehanded fellow, she might have been losing her poor silly heart to some of these lords or gallants who throw away a girl as one does an orange when they have sucked it. Who knows what mischief this cavalier might have done, if I had not been so watchful? Now let him come prying and spying about, she will have a husband to defend her. A smith's hammer is better than an old woman's spindle, any day."

Agnes took her seat with her usual air of thoughtful gravity, her mind seeming to be intensely preoccupied; and her grandmother, though secretly exulting in the supposed cause, resolved not to open the subject with her till they were at home or alone at night.

"I have my defence to make to Father Francesco, too," she said to herself, "for hurrying on this betrothal against his advice; but one must manage a little with these priests—the saints forgive me! I really think sometimes, because they can't marry themselves, they would rather see every pretty girl in a convent than with a husband. It's natural enough, too. Father Francesco will be like the rest of the world: when he can't help a thing, he will see the will of the Lord in it."

Thus prosperously the world seemed to go with old Elsie. Meantime, when her back was turned, as she was kneeling over her basket, sorting out lemons, Agnes happened to look up, and there, just under the arch of the gateway, where she had seen him the first time, sat the cavalier on a splendid horse, with a white feather streaming backward from his black riding-hat and dark curls.

He bowed low and kissed his hand to her, and before she knew it her eyes met his, which seemed to flash light and sunshine all through her; and then he turned his horse and was gone through the gate, while she, filled with self-reproach, was taking her little heart to task for the instantaneous throb of happiness which had passed through her whole being at that sight. She had not turned away her head, nor said a prayer, as Father Francesco told her to do, because the whole thing had been sudden as a flash; but now it was gone, she prayed, "My God, help me not to love him!—let me love Thee alone!" But many times in the course of the day, as she twisted her flax, she found herself wondering whither he could be going. Had he really gone to that enchanted cloud-land, in the old purple Apennines, whither he wanted to carry her—gone, perhaps, never to return? That was best. But was he reconciled with the Church? Was that great soul that looked out of those eyes to be for ever lost, or would the pious exhortations of her uncle avail? And then she thought he had said to her, that if she would go with him, he would confess and take the sacrament, and be reconciled with the Church, and so his soul be saved.

She resolved to tell this to Father Francesco. Perhaps he would—No—she shivered as she remembered the severe, withering look with

which the holy father had spoken of him, and the awfulness of his manner—he would never consent. And then her grandmother—No, there was no possibility.

Meanwhile Agnes' good old uncle sat in the orange-shaded garden, busily perfecting his sketches; but his mind was distracted, and his thoughts wandered, and often he rose, and, leaving his drawings, would pace up and down the little place, absorbed in earnest prayer.

The thought of his master's position was hourly growing upon him. The real world with its hungry and angry tide was washing each hour higher and higher up on the airy shore of the ideal, and bearing the pearls and enchanted shells of fancy out into its salt and muddy waters.

"Oh, my master, my father!" he said, "is the martyr's crown of fire indeed waiting thee? Will God desert His own? But was not Christ crucified?—and the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. But surely Florence will not consent. The whole city will make a stand for him; they are ready, if need be, to pluck out their eyes and give them to him. Florence will certainly be a refuge for him. But why do I put confidence in man? In the Lord alone have I righteousness and strength."

Here the old monk raised the psalm, "*Quare fremunt gentes*," and his voice rose and fell through the flowery recesses and dripping grottoes of the old gorge, sad and earnest like the protest of the few and feeble of Christ's own against the rushing legions of the world. Yet, as he sang, courage and holy hope came into his soul from the sacred words; just such courage as they afterwards brought to Luther, and to the Puritans in later times.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MONK'S DEPARTURE.

THE three inhabitants of the little dovecot were sitting in their garden after supper, enjoying the cool freshness. The place was perfumed with the smell of orange-blossoms, brought out by gentle showers that had fallen during the latter part of the afternoon, and all three felt the tranquillizing effects of the sweet evening air. The monk sat bending over his drawings, resting the frame on which they lay on the mossy garden-wall, so as to get the latest advantage of the rich golden twilight which now glowed in the sky. Agnes sat by him on the same wall, now glancing over his shoulder at his work, and now leaning thoughtfully on her elbow, gazing pensively down into the deep shadows of the gorge, or out where the golden light of evening streamed under the arches of the old Roman bridge, to the wide, bright sea beyond.

Old Elsie bustled about with unusual content in the lines of her keen wrinkled face. Already her thoughts were running on household furnishing and bridal finery. She unlocked an old chest which, from its heavy,

quaint carvings of dark wood must have been some relic of the fortunes of her better days, and, taking out of a little till of the same a string of fine silvery pearls, held them up admiringly to the evening light: a splendid pair of pearl earrings also were produced from the same receptacle.

She sighed at first, as she looked at these things, and then smiled with rather an air of triumph, and, coming to where Agnes reclined on the wall, held them up playfully before her.

"See here, little one!" she said.

"Oh, what pretty things! where did they come from?" asked Agnes, innocently.

"Where did they? Sure enough! Little did you or any one else know old Elsie had things like these! But she meant her little Agnes should hold up her head with the best. No girl in Sorrento will have such wedding finery as this?"

"Wedding finery, grandmamma?" repeated Agnes, faintly, "what does that mean?"

"What does that mean, slyboots? Ah, you know well enough! What were you and Antonio talking about all the time this morning? Did he not ask you to marry him?"

"Yes, grandmamma; but I told him I was not going to marry. You promised me, dear grandmother, the other night, that I should not marry till I was willing; and I told Antonio I was not willing."

"The girl says but true, sister," put in the monk; "you remember you gave her your word that she should not be married till she gave her consent willingly."

"But, Agnes, my pretty one, what can be the objection?" old Elsie urged, coaxingly. "Where will you find a better made man, or more honest, or more kind? and he is handsome, and you will have a home that all the girls will envy."

"Grandmamma, remember, you promised me,—you *promised* me," persisted Agnes, looking distressed, and speaking earnestly.

"Well, well, child! but can't I ask a civil question, if I did? What is your objection to Antonio?"

"Only that I don't want to be married."

"Now you know, child," returned Elsie, "I never will consent to your going to a convent. You might as well put a knife through my old heart as talk to me of that. And if you don't go, you must marry somebody; and who could be better than Antonio?"

"Oh, grandmamma, am I not a good girl? What have I done that you are so anxious to get me away from you?" pleaded Agnes. "I like Antonio well enough, but I like you ten thousand times better. Why cannot we live together just as we do now? I am strong, and can work a great deal harder than I do. You ought to let me work more, so that you need not work so hard and tire yourself; but let me carry the heavy basket, and dig round the trees."

"Pooh! a pretty story!" cried Elsie. "We are two lone women,

and the times are unsettled; there are robbers and loose fellows about, and we want a protector."

"And is not the good Lord our protector? has He not always kept us, grandmother?" returned Agnes.

"Oh, that's well enough to say; but folks can't always get along so: it's far better trusting the Lord with a good strong man about, like Antonio, for instance. I should like to see the man that would dare be uncivil to *his* wife. But go your ways; it's no use toiling away one's life for children, who, after all, won't turn their little finger for you."

"Now, dear grandmother," pleaded Agnes, "have I not said I would do everything for you, and work hard for you? Ask me to do anything else in the world, grandmamma; I will do anything to make you happy, except marry this man; that I cannot."

"And that is the only thing I want you to do. Well, I suppose I may as well lock up these things; I see my gifts are not cared for."

And the old soul turned and went in quite testily, leaving Agnes with a grieved heart, sitting still by her uncle.

"Never weep, little one," said the kind old monk, when he saw the silent tears falling one after another; "your grandmother loves you, after all, and will come out of this, if we are quiet."

"This is such a beautiful world," said Agnes, "who would think it would be such a hard one to live in?—such battles and conflicts as people have here!"

"You say well, little heart; but great is the glory to be revealed; so let us have courage."

"Dear uncle, have you heard any ill tidings of late?" asked Agnes. "I noticed this morning you were cast down, and to-night you look so tired and sad."

"Yes, dear child, heavy tidings have indeed come. My dear master at Florence is hard beset by wicked men, and in great danger; in danger, perhaps, of falling a martyr to his holy zeal for the blessed Jesus and his Church."

"But cannot our holy father, the Pope, protect him? You should go to Rome directly and lay the case before him."

"It is not always possible to be protected by the Pope," replied Father Antonio, evasively. "But I grieve much, dear child, that I can be with you no longer. I must gird up my loins and set out for Florence, to see with my own eyes how the battle is going for my holy master."

"Ah, must I lose you, too, my dear, best friend?" asked Agnes. "What shall I do?"

"Thou hast the same Lord Jesus, and the same dear Mother, when I am gone. Have faith in God, and cease not to pray for His Church—and for me too."

"That I will, dear uncle! I will pray for you more than ever; for prayer now will be all my comfort. But," she added, with hesitation, "oh, uncle, you promised to visit *him*!"

"Never fear, little Agnes; I will do that. I go to him this very night—now even—for the daylight waxes too scant for me to work longer."

"But you will come back and stay with us to-night, uncle?"

"Yes, I will; but to-morrow morning I must be up and away with the birds; I have laboured hard all day to finish the drawings for the lad who shall carve the shrine, that he may busy himself thereon in my absence."

"Then you will come back?"

"Certainly, dear heart, I will come back; of that be assured. Pray God it be before long, too."

So saying, the good monk drew his cowl over his head, and, putting his portfolio of drawings under his arm, began to wend his way towards the old town.

Agnes watched him departing, her heart in a strange flutter of eagerness and solicitude. What were these dreadful troubles which were coming upon her good uncle?—who those enemies of the Church that beset that saintly teacher he so much looked up to? And why was lawless violence allowed to run such riot in Italy, as it had in the case of the unfortunate cavalier? As she thought things over, she was burning with a repressed desire to *do* something herself to abate these troubles.

"I am not a knight," she said to herself, "and I cannot fight for the good cause. I am not a priest, and I cannot argue for it. I cannot preach and convert sinners. What, then, can I do? I can pray. Suppose I should make a pilgrimage? Yes; that would be a good work; and I will. I will walk to Rome, praying at every shrine and holy place; and then, when I come to the Holy City, whose very dust is made precious with the blood of the martyrs and saints, I will seek the house of our dear father the Pope, and entreat his forgiveness for this poor soul. He will not scorn me, for he is in the place of the blessed Jesus, and the richest princess and the poorest maiden are equal in his sight. Ah, that will be beautiful! Holy Mother," she said, falling on her knees before the shrine, "here I vow and promise that I will go praying to the Holy City. Smile on me and help me!"

And by the twinkle of the flickering lamp which threw its light upon the picture, Agnes thought surely the placid face brightened to a tender maternal smile, and her enthusiastic imagination saw in this an omen of success.

Old Elsie was moody and silent this evening; vexed at the thwarting of her schemes. It was the first time the idea had ever gained a foothold in her mind, that her docile and tractable grandchild could really have for any serious length of time a will opposed to her own, and she found it even now difficult to believe it. Hitherto she had shaped her life as easily as she could mould a biscuit, and it was all plain sailing before her. The force and decision of this young will rose as suddenly upon her as the one rock in the middle of the ocean which a voyager unexpectedly discovered by striking on it.

But Elsie by no means regarded the game as lost. She mentally went over the field, considering here and there what was yet to be done.

The subject had fairly been broached. Agnes had listened to it, and parted in friendship from Antonio. Now his old mother must be soothed and pacified; and Antonio must be made to persevere.

"What is a girl worth that can be won at the first asking?" quoth Elsie. "Depend upon it, she will fall to thinking of him, and the next time she sees him she will give him a good look. The girl never knew what it was to have a lover; no wonder she doesn't take to it at first: there's where her bringing up comes in, so different from other girls'. Courage, Elsie! Nature will speak in its own time."

Thus soliloquizing, she prepared to go to the cottage of Meta and Antonio, which was situated at no great distance.

"Nobody will think of coming here this time o' night," she said; "and the girl is in for a good hour at least with her prayers, so I think I may venture. I don't really like to leave her; but it's not a great way, and I shall be back in a few moments. I want just to put a word into old Meta's ear, that she may teach Antonio how to demean himself."

And so the old soul took her spinning and away went, leaving Agnes absorbed in her devotions.

The solemn starry night looked down steadfastly on the little garden. The evening wind creeping with gentle stir among the orange-leaves, and the falling waters of the fountain dripping their distant, solitary way down from rock to rock through the lonely gorge, were the only sounds that broke the stillness.

The monk was the first of the two to return; for those accustomed to the habits of elderly cronies on a gossiping expedition of any domestic importance will not be surprised that Elsie's few moments of projected talk lengthened imperceptibly into hours.

Agnes came forward anxiously to meet her uncle. He seemed wan and haggard, and trembling with some recent emotion.

"What is the matter with you, dear uncle?" she asked. "Has anything happened?"

"Nothing, child, nothing. I have only been talking on painful subjects; deep perplexities, out of which I can scarcely see my way. Would to God this night of light were past, and I could see morning on the mountains!"

"My uncle, have you not, then, succeeded in bringing this young man to the bosom of the True Church?"

"Child, the way is hedged up, and made almost impassable by difficulties you little wot of. They cannot be told to you; they are enough to destroy the faith of the very elect."

Agnes' heart sank within her, as the monk, sitting down on the wall of the garden, clasped his hands over one knee and gazed fixedly before him.

The sight of her uncle,—generally so cheerful, so elastic, so full of

bright thoughts and beautiful words—thus utterly cast down, was both a mystery and a terror to Agnes.

"Oh, my uncle," she said, "it is hard that I must not know, and that I can do nothing, when I feel ready to die for this cause! What is one little life? Ah, if I had a thousand to give, I could melt them all into it, like little drops of rain in the sea! Be not utterly cast down, good uncle! Does not our dear Lord and Saviour reign in the heavens yet?"

"Sweet little nightingale!" said the monk, stretching his hand towards her. "Well did my master say that he gained strength to his soul always by talking with Christ's little children!"

"And all the dear saints and angels, they are not dead or idle either," pursued Agnes, her face kindling; "they are busy all around us. I know not what this trouble is you speak of; but let us think what legions of bright angels and holy men and women are caring for us."

"Well said, well said, dear child! There is, thank God, a Church Triumphant; a crowned queen, a glorious bride; and the poor, struggling Church Militant shall rise to join her! What matter, then, though our way lie through dungeon and chains, through fire and sword, if we may attain to that glory at last?"

"Uncle, are there such dreadful things really before you?"

"There may be, child. I say of my master, as did the holy Apostles: 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.' I feel a heavy presage. But I must not trouble you, child. Early in the morning I will be up and away. I go with this youth, whose pathway lies a certain distance along mine, and whose company I seek for his good as well as my pleasure."

"You go with *him*?" exclaimed Agnes, with a start of surprise.

"Yes; his refuge in the mountains lies between here and Rome, and he hath kindly offered to bring me on my way faster than I can go on foot; and I would fain see our beautiful Florence as soon as may be. O Florence, Florence, Lily of Italy! wilt thou let thy prophet perish?"

"But, uncle, if he die for the faith, he will be a blessed martyr. That crown is worth dying for," said Agnes.

"You say well, little one; you say well! '*Ex oribus parvulorum.*' But one shrinks from that in the person of a friend which one could cheerfully welcome for one's self. Oh, the blessed cross! never is it welcome to the flesh; and yet how joyfully the spirit may walk under it!"

"Dear uncle, I have made a solemn vow before our Holy Mother this night," said Agnes, "to go on a pilgrimage to Rome, and at every shrine and holy place to pray that these great afflictions which beset all of you may have a happy issue."

"My sweet heart, what have you done? Have you considered the unsettled roads, the wild, unruly men that are abroad, the robbers with which the mountains are filled?"

"These are all Christ's children and my brothers," said Agnes; "for them was the most holy blood shed, as well as for me. They cannot harm one who prays for them."

"But, dear heart of mine, these ungodly brawlers think little of prayer; and this beautiful, innocent little face will but move the vilest and most brutal thoughts and deeds."

"Saint Agnes still lives, dear uncle; and He who kept her in worse trial. I shall walk through them all pure as snow; I am assured I shall. The star which led the wise men and stood over the young Child and his Mother will lead me, too."

"But your grandmother?"

"The Lord will incline her heart to go with me. Dear uncle, it does not beseem a child to reflect on its elders, yet I cannot but see that grand-mamma loves this world and me too well for her soul's good. This journey will be for her eternal repose."

"Well, well, dear one, I cannot now advise. Take advice of your confessor, and the blessed Lord and his holy Mother be with you! But come now, I would soothe myself to sleep; for I have need of good rest to-night. Let us sing together our dear master's hymn of the Cross."

And the monk and the maiden sang together:—

"Jesu, sommo conforto,
Tu sei tutto il mio amore,
E 'l mio beato porto,
E santo Redentore!
O gran bontà!
Dolce pietà!
Felice quel che teco unito sta!

"Deh! quante volte offeso
T'ha l'alma e 'l cor meschino!
E tu sei in croce steso
Per salvarmi rapino!

"Jesu, fussio confitto
Sopra quel duro ligno,
Dove ti vedo affitto,
Jesu, Signor benigno!

"O croce, fammi loco,
E le mie membre prendi,
Che del tuo dolce foco
Il cor e l'alma accendi!

"Inflamma il mio cor tanto
Del amor tuo divino,
Ch'io arda tutto quanto
Che paia un serafino!

"La croce e 'l crocifisso
Sia nel mio cor scolpito,
Ed io sia sempre affisso
In gloria ov'egli è ito!"*

* Jesus, best comfort of my soul,
Be thou my only love,
My sacred Saviour from my sins,
My door to heaven above!
O lofty goodness, love divine,
Blest is the soul made one with thine!

Alas, how oft this sordid heart
Hath wounded thy pure eye!
Yet for this heart upon the cross
Thou gav'st thyself to die!

Ah, would I were extended there,
Upon that cold, hard tree,
Where I have seen thee, gracious Lord,
Breathe out thy life for me!

Cross of my Lord, give room! give room!
To thee my flesh be given!
Cleansed in thy fires of love and pain,
My soul, rise pure to heaven!

Burn in my heart, celestial flame,
With memories of him,
Till from earth's dross refined I rise
To join the seraphim!

Ah, vanish each unworthy trace
Of earthly care or pride,
Leave only, graven on my heart,
The Cross, the Crucified!

As the monk sang, his soul seemed to fuse itself into the sentiment with that natural grace peculiar to his nation. He walked up and down the little garden, apparently forgetful of Agnes or of any earthly presence, and in the last verses stretched his hands towards heaven with streaming eyes and a fervour of utterance indescribable.

The soft and passionate tenderness of the Italian words must exhale in an English translation, but enough may remain to show that the hymns with which Savonarola at this time sowed the mind of Italy often mingled the Moravian quaintness and energy with the Wesleyan purity and tenderness. One of the great means of popular reform which he proposed was the supplanting of the obscene and licentious songs, which at that time so generally defiled the minds of the young, by religious words and melodies. The children and young people brought up under his influence, were sedulously stored with treasures of sacred melody, as the safest companions of leisure hours, and the surest guard against temptation.

"Come now, my little one," said the monk, after they had ceased singing, as he laid his hand on Agnes's head. "I am strong now; I know where I stand. And you, my little one, you are one of my master's 'Children of the Cross.' You must sing the hymns of our dear master, that I have taught you, when I am far away. A hymn is a singing angel, and goes walking through the earth, scattering the devils before it. Therefore he who creates hymns imitates the most excellent and lovely works of our Lord God, who made the angels. These hymns watch our chamber-door; they sit upon our pillow, they sing to us when we awake; and therefore our master was resolved to sow the minds of his young people with them, as our lovely Italy is sown with the seeds of all coloured flowers. How lovely has it often been to me, as I sat at my work in Florence, to hear the little children go by, chanting of Jesus and Mary; and young men singing to young maidens, not vain flatteries of their beauty, but the praises of the One only Beautiful, whose smile sows heaven with stars like flowers! Ah, in my day I have seen blessed times in Florence! Truly was she worthy to be called the Lily City!—for all her care seemed to be to make white her garments to receive her Lord and Bridegroom. Yes, though she had sinned like the Magdalen, yet she loved much, like her. She washed His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. Oh, my beautiful Florence, be true to thy vows, be true to thy Lord and Governor, Jesus Christ, and all shall be well!"

"Amen, dear uncle!" said Agnes. "I will not fail to pray day and night, that thus it may be. And now, if you must travel so far, you must go to rest. Grandmamma has gone long ago. I saw her steal by as we were singing."

"And is there any message from my little Agnes to this young man?" asked the monk.

"Yes. Say to him that Agnes prays daily that he may be a worthy son and soldier of the Lord Jesus."

"Amen, sweet heart! Jesu and His sweet Mother bless thee!"

Roundabout Papers.—No. XVII

A MISSISSIPPI BUBBLE.



HIS initial group of dusky children of the captivity is copied out of a little sketch-book which I carried in many a round-about journey, and will point a moral or adorn a T as well as any other sketch in the volume. Yonder drawing was made in a country where there

was such hospitality, friendship, kindness shown to the humble designer, that his eyes do not care to look out for faults, or his pen to note them. How they sang; how they laughed and grinned; how they scraped, bowed, and complimented you and each other, those negroes of the cities of the southern parts of the then United States! My business kept me in the towns; I was but in one negro plantation-village, and there were only women and little children, the men being out a-field. But there was plenty of cheerfulness in the huts, under the great trees—I speak of what I saw—and amidst the dusky bondsmen of the cities. I witnessed a curious gaiety; heard amongst the black folk endless singing, shouting, and laughter; and saw on holydays black gentlemen and ladies arrayed in such splendour and comfort as freeborn workmen in our towns seldom exhibit. What a grin and bow that dark gentleman performed, who was the porter at the colonel's, when he said, "You write you name, mas'r, else I will forgot." I am not going into the slavery question, I am not an advocate for "the institution," as I know, madam, by that angry toss of your head, you are about to declare me to be. For

domestic purposes, my dear lady, it seemed to me about the dearest institution that can be devised. In a house in a Southern city you will find fifteen negroes doing the work which John, the cook, the housemaid, and the help, do perfectly in your own comfortable London house. And these fifteen negroes are the pick of a family of some eighty or ninety. Twenty are too sick, or too old for work, let us say : twenty too clumsy : twenty are too young, and have to be nursed and watched by ten more.* And master has to maintain the immense crew to do the work of half-a-dozen willing hands. No, no; let Mitchel, the exile from poor dear enslaved Ireland, wish for a gang of "fat niggers;" I would as soon you should make me a present of a score of Bengal elephants, when I need but a single stout horse to pull my brougham.

How hospitable they were, those Southern men ! In the North itself the welcome was not kinder, as I, who have eaten Northern and Southern salt can testify ! As for New Orleans, in spring-time,—just when the orchards were flushing over with peach-blossoms, and the sweet herbs came to flavour the juleps—it seemed to me the city of the world where you can eat and drink the most and suffer the least. At Bordeaux itself, claret is not better to drink than at New Orleans. It was all good—believe an expert Robert—from the half-dollar Médoc of the public hotel table, to the private gentleman's choicest wine. Claret is, somehow, good in that gifted place at dinner, at supper, and at breakfast in the morning. It is good : it is superabundant :—and there is nothing to pay. Find me speaking ill of such a country ! When I do, *pone me pigris campis* : smother me in a desert, or let Mississippi or Garonne drown me ! At that comfortable tavern on Pontchartrain we had a *bouillabaisse* than which a better was never eaten at Marseilles; and not the least headache in the morning, I give you my word; on the contrary, you only wake with a sweet refreshing thirst for claret and water. They say there is fever there in the autumn: but not in the spring-time, when the peach-blossoms blush over the orchards, and the sweet herbs come to flavour the juleps.

I was bound from New Orleans to Saint Louis; and our walk was constantly on the Levee, whence we could see a hundred of those huge white Mississippi steamers at their moorings in the river : "Look," said my friend Lochlomond to me, as we stood one day on the quay—"look at that post ! Look at that coffee-house behind it ! Sir, last year a steamer blew up in the river yonder, just where you see those men pulling off in the boat. By that post where you are standing a mule was cut in two by a fragment of the burst machinery, and a bit of the chimney stove in that first-floor window of the coffee-house killed a negro who was cleaning knives in the top room !" I looked at the post, at the coffee-house window,

* This was an account given by a gentleman at Richmond of his establishment. Six European servants would have kept his house and stables well. "His farm," he said, "barely sufficed to maintain the negroes residing on it."

at the steamer in which I was going to embark, at my friend, with a pleasing interest not divested of melancholy. Yesterday, it was the donkey, thinks I, who was cut in two: it may be *cras mihi*. Why, in the same little sketch-book, there is a drawing of an Alabama river steamer which blew up on the very next voyage after that in which your humble servant was on board! Had I but waited another week, I might have These incidents give a queer zest to the voyage down the life stream in America. When our huge, tall, white, pasteboard castle of a steamer began to work up stream, every limb in her creaked, and groaned, and quivered, so that you might fancy she would burst right off. Would she hold together, or would she split into ten million of shivers? O my home and children! Would your humble servant's body be cut in two across yonder chain on the Levee, or be precipitated into yonder first-floor, so as to damage the chest of a black man cleaning boots at the window? The black man is safe for me, thank goodness. But you see the little accident *might* have happened. It has happened; and if to a mule, why not to a much more docile animal? On our journey up the Mississippi, I give you my honour we were on fire three times, and burned our cook-room down. The deck at night was a great firework—the chimney spouted myriads of stars, which fell blackening on our garments, sparkling on to the deck, or gleaming into the mighty stream through which we laboured—the mighty yellow stream with all its snags.

How I kept up my courage through these dangers shall now be narrated. The excellent landlord of the Saint Charles Hotel, when I was going away, begged me to accept two bottles of the very finest Cognac, with his compliments; and I found them in my state-room with my luggage. Lochlomond came to see me off, and as he squeezed my hand at parting, "Roundabout," says he, "the wine mayn't be very good on board, so I have brought a dozen-case of the Médoc which you liked;" and we grasped together the hands of friendship and farewell. Whose boat is this pulling up to the ship? It is our friend Glenlivat, who gave us the dinner on Lake Pontchartrain. "Roundabout," says he, "we have tried to do what we could for you, my boy; and it has been done *de bon cœur*" (I detect a kind tremulousness in the good fellow's voice as he speaks). "I say,—hem!—the a—the wine isn't too good on board, so I've brought you a dozen of Médoc for your voyage, you know. And God bless you; and when I come to London in May I shall come and see you. Hallo! here's Johnson come to see you off, too!"

As I am a miserable sinner, when Johnson grasped my hand, he said, "Mr. Roundabout, you can't be sure of the wine on board these steamers, so I thought I would bring you a little case of that light claret which you liked at my house. *Et de trois!* No wonder I could face the Mississippi with so much courage supplied to me! Where are you, honest friends, who gave me of your kindness and your cheer? May I be considerably boiled, blown up, and snagged, if I speak hard words of you. May claret turn sour ere I do!"

Mounting the stream it chanced that we had very few passengers. How far is the famous city of Memphis from New Orleans? I do not mean the Egyptian Memphis, but the American Memphis, from which to the American Cairo we slowly toiled up the river—to the American Cairo at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. And at Cairo we parted company from the boat, and from some famous and gifted fellow-passengers who joined us at Memphis, and whose pictures we had seen in many cities of the South. I do not give the names of these remarkable people, unless, by some wondrous chance, in inventing a name I should light upon that real one which some of them bore; but if you please I will say that our fellow-passengers whom we took in at Memphis were no less personages than the Vermont Giant and the famous Bearded Lady of Kentucky and her son. Their pictures I had seen in many cities through which I travelled with my own little performance. I think the Vermont Giant was a trifle taller in his pictures than he was in life (being represented in the former as, at least, some two stories high): but the lady's prodigious beard received no more than justice at the hands of the painter; that portion of it which I saw being really most black, rich, and curly—I say the portion of beard, for this modest or prudent woman kept I don't know how much of the beard covered up with a red handkerchief, from which I suppose it only emerged when she went to bed, or when she exhibited it professionally.

The Giant, I must think, was an overrated giant. I have known gentlemen, not in the profession, better made, and I should say taller, than the Vermont gentleman. A strange feeling I used to have at meals; when, on looking round our little society, I saw the Giant, the Bearded Lady of Kentucky, the little Bearded Boy of three years old, the Captain (this I *think*; but at this distance of time I would not like to make the statement on affidavit), and the three other passengers, all with their knives in their mouths, making play at the dinner—a strange feeling I say it was, and as though I was in a castle of ogres. But, after all, why so squeamish? A few scores of years back, the finest gentlemen and ladies of Europe did the like. Belinda ate with her knife; and Saccharissa had only that weapon, or a two-pronged fork, or a spoon, for her pease. Have you ever looked at Gilray's print of the Prince of Wales, a languid voluptuary, retiring after his meal, and noted the toothpick which he uses? You are right, madam, I own that the subject is revolting and terrible. I will not pursue it. Only—allow that a gentleman, in a shaky steamboat, on a dangerous river, in a far-off country, which caught fire three times during the voyage—(of course I mean the steamboat, not the country), seeing a giant, a voracious supercargo, a bearded lady, and a little boy, not three years of age, with a chin already quite black and curly, all plying their victuals down their throats with their knives—allow, madam, that in such a company a man had a right to feel a little nervous. I don't know whether you have ever remarked the Indian jugglers swallowing their knives, or seen, as I have, a whole table of people performing the same

trick, but if you look at their eyes when they do it, I assure you there is a roll in them which is dreadful.

Apart from this usage which they practise in common with many thousand most estimable citizens, the Vermont gentleman, and the Kentucky whiskered lady—or did I say the reverse?—whichever you like, my dear sir—were quite quiet, modest, unassuming people. She sate working with her needle, if I remember right. He, I suppose, slept in the great cabin, which was seventy feet long at the least, nor, I am bound to say, did I hear in the night any snores or roars, such as you would fancy ought to accompany the sleep of ogres. Nay, this giant had quite a small appetite, (unless, to be sure, he went forward and ate a sheep or two in private with his horrid knife—oh, the dreadful thought!—but in *public*, I say, he had quite a delicate appetite,) and was also a tea-totaller. I don't remember to have heard the lady's voice, though I might, not unnaturally, have been curious to hear it. Was her voice a deep, rich, magnificent bass; or was it soft, fluty, and mild? I shall never know now. Even if she comes to this country, I shall never go and see her. I *have* seen her, and for nothing.

You would have fancied that, as after all we were only some half-dozen on board, she might have dispensed with her red handkerchief, and talked, and eaten her dinner in comfort: but in covering her chin there was a kind of modesty. That beard was her profession: that beard brought the public to see her: out of her business she wished to put that beard aside as it were: as a barrister would wish to put off his wig. I know some who carry theirs into private life, and who mistake you and me for jury-boxes when they address us: but these are not your modest barristers, not your true gentlemen.

Well, I own I respected the lady for the modesty with which, her public business over, she retired into private life. She respected her life, and her beard. That beard having done its day's work, she puts it away in a handkerchief; and becomes, as far as in her lies, a private ordinary person. All public men and women of good sense, I should think, have this modesty. When, for instance, in my small way, poor Mrs. Brown comes simpering up to me, with her album in one hand, a pen in the other, and says, "Ho, ho, dear Mr. Roundabout, write us one of your amusing, &c. &c.," my beard drops behind my handkerchief instantly. Why am I to wag my chin and grin for Mrs. Brown's good pleasure? My dear madam, I have been making faces all day. It is my profession. I do my comic business with the greatest pains, seriousness, and trouble: and with it make, I hope, a not dishonest livelihood. If you ask Mons. Blondin to tea, you don't have a rope stretched from your garret window to the opposite side of the square, and request Monsieur to take his tea out on the centre of the rope? I lay my hand on this waistcoat, and declare that not once in the course of our voyage together did I allow the Kentucky Giant to suppose I was speculating on his stature, or the Bearded Lady to surmise

that I wished to peep under the handkerchief which muffled the lower part of her face.

And the more fool you, says some cynic. (Faugh, those cynics, I hate 'em!) Don't you know, sir, that a man of genius is pleased to have his genius recognized; that a beauty likes to be admired; that an actor likes to be applauded; that stout old Wellington himself was pleased, and smiled when the people cheered him as he passed? Suppose you had paid some respectful elegant compliment to that lady? Suppose you had asked that giant, if, for once, he would take anything at the liquor-bar? you might have learned a great deal of curious knowledge regarding giants and bearded ladies, about whom you evidently now know very little. There was that little boy of three years old, with a fine beard already, and his little legs and arms, as seen out of his little frock, covered with a dark down. What a queer little capering satyr! He was quite good-natured, childish, rather solemn. He had a little Norval dress, I remember: the drollest little Norval.

I have said the B. L. had another child. Now this was a little girl of some six years old, as fair and as smooth of skin, dear madam, as your own darling cherubs. She wandered about the great cabin quite melancholy. No one seemed to care for her. All the family affections were centred on Master Esau yonder. His little beard was beginning to be a little fortune already, whereas Miss Rosalba's was of no good to the family. No one would pay a cent to see *her* little fair face. No wonder the poor little maid was melancholy. As I looked at her, I seemed to walk more and more in a fairy tale, and more and more in a cavern of ogres. Was this a little fondling whom they had picked up in some forest, where lie the picked bones of the queen, her tender mother, and the tough old defunct monarch, her father? No. Doubtless, they were quite good-natured people, these. I don't believe they were unkind to the little girl without the mustachios. It may have been only my fancy that she repined because she had a cheek no more bearded than a rose's.

Would you wish your own daughter, madam, to have a smooth cheek, a modest air, and a gentle feminine behaviour, or to be—I won't say a whiskered prodigy, like this Bearded Lady of Kentucky—but a masculine wonder, a virago, a female personage of more than female strength, courage, wisdom? Some authors, who shall be nameless, are, I know, accused of depicting the most feeble, brainless, namby-pamby heroines, for ever whimpering tears and prattling commonplaces. *You* would have the heroine of your novel so beautiful that she should charm the captain (or hero, whoever he may be,) with her appearance; surprise and confound the bishop with her learning; outride the squire, and get the brush, and, when he fell from his horse, whip out a lancet and bleed him; rescue from fever and death the poor cottager's family whom the doctor had given up; make 21 at the butts with the rifle, when the poor captain only scored 18; give him twenty in fifty at billiards

and beat him; and draw tears from the professional Italian people by her exquisite performance (of voice and violoncello) in the evening;—I say, if a novelist would be popular with ladies—the great novel readers of the world—this is the sort of heroine who would carry him through half-a-dozen editions. Suppose I had asked that Bearded Lady to sing? Confess, now, miss, you would not have been displeased if I had told you that she had a voice like Lablache, only ever so much lower.

My dear, you would like to be a heroine? You would like to travel in triumphal caravans; to see your effigy placarded on city walls; to have your levées attended by admiring crowds, all crying out, "Was there ever such a wonder of a woman?" You would like admiration? Consider the tax you pay for it. You would be alone were you eminent. Were you so distinguished from your neighbours—I will not say by a beard and whiskers, that were odious—but by a great and remarkable intellectual superiority—would you, do you think, be any the happier? Consider envy. Consider solitude. Consider the jealousy and torture of mind which this Kentucky lady must feel, suppose she is to hear that there is, let us say, a Missouri prodigy, with a beard larger than hers? Consider how she is separated from her kind by the possession of that wonder of a beard. When that beard grows grey, how lonely she will be, the poor old thing! If it falls off, the public admiration falls off too; and how she will miss it—the compliments of the trumpeters, the admiration of the crowd, the gilded progress of the car. I see an old woman alone in a decrepit old caravan, with cobwebs on the knocker, with a blistered ensign flapping idly over the door. Would you like to be that deserted person? Ah, Chloe! To be good, to be simple, to be modest, to be loved, be thy lot. Be thankful thou art not taller, nor stronger, nor richer, nor wiser than the rest of the world!

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